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SUNDAY, JULY 11, 2004

Sponsored Paper

U.S. officials warn: Stay clear of Iraqi food

Estimates say over 100 soldiers getting sick each week Page 4



PHOTO BY DAVE DIDIO/Stars and Stripes



PHOTO BY GUS SCHUETTLER/Stars and Stripes

Most GIs love their stays in Germany, and their hosts have traditionally been accommodating and supportive. Top: Wiesbaden gas station owner Gunter Laux gives a thumbs-up sign in support of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia in 1991.

Bottom: Possibly America's most famous GI, Sgt. Elvis Presley relaxes during his stay in Friedberg, Germany, in February 1960.

Love affair ending?

Many Americans — even Elvis — had fun-filled tours in Germany, and U.S.-German relations benefited. But with recent events, the liaison isn't what it used to be.

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PETER PHOTIKOE/Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Unconstitutional guidelines: A federal judge in Brooklyn, N.Y., found sentencing guidelines unconstitutional Friday but still hit an immigrant from Yemen with a tough prison term for lying to investigators probing terrorism. U.S. District Court Judge Nina Gershon's ruling tossing out the guidelines is one of an apparently growing number of similar decisions by federal court judges after a U.S. Supreme Court decision last month that put the federal sentencing structure into question.

The decision about the guidelines was a hollow victory for the defendant, Numan Mafaihi, 31, a gasoline station owner living in New Jersey who has eight children and is expecting a ninth. Gershon still slapped him with a 5-year sentence — the time federal prosecutors wanted — despite finding that the sentencing guidelines on assisting terrorism could not be used.

Ore, same-sex marriage: Oregon became the second state to register same-sex marriage licenses Friday after a state appeals court upheld a lower court order directing officials to record more than 3,000 marriage licenses issued to gay couples in Multnomah County.

Oregon Attorney General Hardy Myers had asked the appeals court to order a hold on registering the licenses while a lawsuit challenging the licenses is pending.

Myers downplayed the importance of registration, saying it was an administrative act that would not authenticate the 3,022 marriage licenses issued by Multnomah County earlier this year, because the Oregon Supreme Court has not ruled on the issue.

Rudolph trial: On Friday, a federal judge in Birmingham, Ala., refused a request by suspected serial bomber Eric Rudolph to see original notes taken by agents who investigated a fatal abortion clinic bombing. U.S. Magistrate Judge T. Michael Putnam said the government already has given the defense hundreds of thousands of pages of formal witness statements, and Rudolph isn't legally due the rough notes that went into making those documents.

The defense claimed it needed the notes because the witness statements it has received contained inconsistencies that could only be resolved by seeing the agents' original work.



The American Media Inc. building in Boca Raton, Fla., where anthrax killed one employee in October 2001, has started fumigation to kill the deadly spores.

Anthrax fumigation: Nearly three years after being the site of a deadly anthrax attack, the former headquarters of a supermarket tabloid in Boca Raton, Fla., is being fumigated in an attempt to eradicate the deadly spores.

Months of planning and rancor over the fate of the infested complex have finally led to the cleanup Sunday, which is set to last 24 to 36 hours.

Chlorine dioxide, a chemical used to disinfect drinking water and treat fruits and veg-



Posey case: Cody Posey, 14, and his attorney, Gary Mitchell, attend a hearing in Children's Court on Friday in Alamogordo, N.M. Posey was charged with the murders of his father, stepmother and stepister after their bodies were found on a ranch owned by ABC's *San Donatelli*. Prosecutors have 30 days to decide whether to try Cody as an adult. District Attorney Scot Key said the teen could get up to 30 years if tried and convicted as an adult.

tables, will be pumped into the American Media Inc. building to kill the anthrax spores, which have spread throughout its 65,000 square feet. Repeated tests will then determine the safety of the building before a quarantine is lifted, officials said Friday at a community meeting.

Right-to-die debate: The parents of a Clearwater, Fla., woman at the center of one of the nation's longest right-to-die cases are again seeking permission to enter a lawsuit over the constitutionality of a new state law keeping her alive.

The parents of Terri Schiavo filed legal papers Friday appealing last week's ruling denying them permission to enter the case brought by their son-in-law against Gov. Jeb Bush.

Terri Schiavo's husband, Michael, sued the governor over the hastily passed October law that forced doctors to reinstate her feeding tube. Michael Schiavo has said his wife, who has been severely brain-damaged for more than a decade, does not want to be kept alive artificially.

Mad cow and cosmetics: The government told cosmetics makers Friday they can no longer use brain and spinal cord tissue from older cattle in lipstick, hair sprays and other products.

The new Food and Drug Administration regulations come in the wake of the first U.S. case of mad cow disease last December. They are aimed at preventing the disease from reaching people, where it can cause a rare but similar fatal condition, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Consumer groups complained that the regulations are insufficient, saying the government should also ban the same tissues from younger cattle and extend the prohibition to use in animal feed.

Bush ranch protesters: A judge on Friday dismissed all charges against five anti-war activists who were arrested last year on their way to President Bush's ranch in Texas.

The five were convicted in February of violating the city's protest ordinance and fined \$200 to \$500. But McLennan County Judge Tom Ragland ruled the ordinance

was overly broad and violated the First Amendment.

The ordinance required 15 days' notice and a \$25 fee before the police chief could issue a permit for a protest. Crawford officials have since amended the ordinance to require seven days of notice.

World

Rebuilding Haiti: More than \$1 billion will probably be needed to rebuild Haiti, the Americas' poorest country, after its recent political upheaval, a senior Treasury Department official said Wednesday.

John Taylor, the department's under secretary for international affairs, offered the estimate as he prepared to visit Port-au-Prince Thursday and meet with government representatives to discuss their efforts to establish economic stability in Haiti.



Taylor

Bird flu outbreak: The Thailand government on Saturday reported new outbreaks of a deadly strain of bird flu virus in two northern provinces.

Authorities discovered the virus in Uttaradit and Sukhothai provinces, bringing the total number of affected areas to four, said Yukol Limlathong, director general of Thailand's Livestock Department.

Local television station ITV reported that 1,000 chickens were slaughtered in Uttaradit, while 200 were culled in Sukhothai.

U.N. war crimes tribunal: The president warned Friday that Serbia-Montenegro faces international isolation if it fails to extradite war crimes suspects to the U.N. tribunal.

"Any delay in handing over war crimes suspects will distance the country further from the European Union, despite the fact that the majority of our people want to join the EU," President Svetozar Marovic told reporters.

Cooperation with the tribunal is the key condition for any U.S. and other Western political and financial support for the Balkan country.

Photos and stories from wire services

Marines clash with insurgents in Ramadi

Saboteurs attack pipeline running to power station in northern Iraq

BY DANICA KIRKA

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. Marines clashed with insurgents at a taxi stand Saturday in a city known as a stronghold of Saddam Hussein supporters, killing three of the attackers and wounding five others, hospital officials said.

The Marines came under fire from the group of insurgents in Ramadi, the military said in a statement. Insurgents frequently clash with coalition forces in the region, a hotbed of insurgent activity known as the Sunni Triangle.

The fighting left three Iraqis dead and five injured, local hospital official Saed Ali said.

Elsewhere, insurgents blew up three liquor stores in Baquba, a city north of Baghdad, amid fears that Islamic militants may be trying to impose their strict interpretation of Islam on the city, witnesses said. The blasts killed a taxi driver who happened to be passing by, said Dr. Nassir Jawad from Baquba General Hospital.

Meanwhile, a Philippine worker reportedly seized by guerrillas in the nearby city of Fallujah appealed to Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to meet their demands and withdraw the Philippines small contingent of troops, according to a video shown Saturday on the Al-Jazeera television station.

Moments before the tape was aired, the Philippines announced it would withdraw its 51-member humanitarian contingent from Iraq as scheduled after its mandate ends Aug. 20.

Also Saturday, saboteurs attacked a natural gas pipeline that runs from the oil-rich northern city of Kirkuk to a power station, an official with the North Oil Com-

pany said. The attack is likely to affect power supplies in the northern region of Iraq, but it was not immediately clear by how much.

Insurgents often target the country's crude oil and natural gas infrastructure in hopes of cutting off revenue to Iraq's interim government.

Such attacks, together with hostage taking and other acts of intimidation, are intended to disrupt efforts to stabilize and rebuild postwar Iraq.

While the Philippines awaited the fate of delacruz, Bulgarians were waiting with trepidation to hear about the fate of two of their countrymen taken captive by a separate group.

Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Tawhid and Jihad group — which has claimed responsibility for the beheadings of two captives in the past — threatened to kill the Bulgarians if the United States does not release all Iraq detainees in 24 hours. The threat was made in a video broadcast Friday morning.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for the release of delacruz and two Bulgarian hostages, describing them as "innocent civilians who may have been abducted for political ends in the conflict."

The Bulgarian Foreign Ministry said the Bulgarian truckers were kidnapped en route to the northern city of Mosul, coming from Bulgaria via Turkey and Syria. Their schedule would have put them in Mosul on June 29, the last day either man contacted his family.

Bulgaria has a 480-member infantry unit under Polish command in the southern city of Karbala, a small part of Iraq's 160,000 member multinational force.



Friends and relatives celebrate upon hearing the news that Angelo dela Cruz was released by his Iraqi captors on Saturday in Mexico town in the province of Pampanga, north of Manila. The release followed an announcement from President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's spokesman saying the Philippines' small peacekeeping contingent in Iraq would be withdrawn when its tour ends Aug. 20.

Filipino hostage may be free

BY PAUL ALEXANDER

The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Iraqi militants freed a Filipino hostage on Saturday, Philippine authorities said, just hours after the Manila confirmed it would withdraw its small peacekeeping contingent from Iraq on Aug. 20 as planned.

The Arab television station Al-Jazeera, however, said it had received a message from the militants denying that truck driver Angelo dela Cruz had been released.

The Philippine government made no connection between the announcement about its troops and dela Cruz's reported release. But if the release were confirmed, it would appear the statement by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's administration had satisfied his captors.

In Baghdad, diplomats were cautious about dela Cruz's fate.

"We don't want to derailed the process," one diplomat said on condition of anonymity. "We're not going to say we have him until we see him."

The Islamic Army of Iraq-Khalid bin al-Waleed Brigade said in a statement carried by Qatar-based Al-Jazeera television that it had not freed dela Cruz but will give "the Philippines government 24 hours to withdraw from Iraq."

Iraqi militants have repeatedly used terrorist attacks to try to force governments to withdraw from the U.S.-led occupation force.

In March, a series of terrorist bombings on commuter trains in Madrid shortly before national elections was believed to have contributed to a victory by the socialists, who had campaigned on a platform of withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq. The new prime minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, pulled out the troops soon after taking office.

Militants also tried to pressure South Korea by kidnapping one of its citizens in Iraq and demanding the Asian country call off plans to deploy 3,000 troops beginning in August. South Korea refused, and the captive was beheaded last month.

The men who snatched dela Cruz near the restive Sunni Triangle city of Fallujah on Wednesday said they would kill him unless Manila pulled out its 51-member force within three days. The deadline was hours away late Saturday, when the Philippine government announced his release.

"While this man is still not in our hands, he will

be brought to a hotel in Baghdad, where he will be turned over to our people," said Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas, who was staying with the hostess's family in a hotel at the former Clark Air Base.

"He is in safe hands," added National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

Santo Tomas said President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had called dela Cruz's wife to relay the news. Jubilation broke out at the family home in northern Pampanga province.

"I feel so relieved," said dela Cruz's brother Jesse. "We are very happy. Our village is celebrating."

The withdrawal announcement appeared to be deliberately ambiguous, reflecting the fine line that the Philippines was walking to obtain dela Cruz's release while remaining one of Washington's closest supporters.

It left open the prospect that Philippine troops could return under U.N. auspices, although a high-ranking official said any further deployment would be the subject of government discussions that would start from scratch. Before the kidnapping, the Philippines had been discussing whether to extend the peacekeeping mandate.

"Our humanitarian contingent is scheduled to return on Aug. 20," presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said. "Our future actions shall be guided by the U.N. Security Council decision as embodied in Resolution 1546, which defines the role of the U.N. and its member states in the future of Iraq."

Resolution 1546 covered the recent handover of power to Iraq's interim government. It specifies that Iraq can request "the continued presence of the multinational force and setting out its tasks."

The pullout decision is a symbolic blow to the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, but it doesn't affect the more crucial Philippine contingent — the 4,000 or so civilian workers at U.S. camps around Iraq who would be difficult to replace. Arroyo has frozen any further worker deployments.

A former U.S. colony, the Philippines has maintained close ties with Washington even after the closure of military bases here in the early 1990s. With Muslim and communist insurgencies of its own, the poor country has hosted major counterterrorism training for its troops by U.S. forces, and another round is scheduled to start late this month.



Angelo dela Cruz

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, 875 U.S. servicemen have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq last year, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 651 died as a result of hostile action and 224 died of nonhostile causes.

The British military has reported 59 deaths; Italy, 18; Spain, eight; Bulgaria and Poland, six each; Ukraine, four; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and the Netherlands have reported one each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 737 U.S. servicemen have died — 542 as a result of hostile action and 195 of non-hostile causes.

The latest deaths reported by military:

■ A soldier died Thursday in a non-hostile incident.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Marine Pvt. 1st Class Samuel R. Novak, 38, Cleveland, died Wednesday in Samarra, Iraq, when a rocket-propelled grenade exploded near his vehicle; assigned to the Army National Guard's 2nd Engineer Battalion; Akron, Ohio.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Scott E. Dougherty, 20, Bradenton Fla. and Marine Pfc. Rodricka A. Youmans, 22, Allendale, S.C., killed Tuesday in Iraq's Anbar province; assigned to 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force; Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Doctors warn GI about eating Iraqi food

Local restaurant food may come with a side of parasites, tapeworms

BY RICK EMERT
Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD — Although the people on the right and the kebabs may be tasty, U.S. military officials say soldiers should avoid eating food prepared in local Iraqi restaurants.

That next kebab could include a side of hydatid, a parasitic tapeworm disease that may not show symptoms for years.

Hydatid disease is the No. 1 food-borne illness being treated at Iraqi hospitals, said Col. Hugh Hodges, Theater Veterinary Officer, 2nd Medical Brigade, in Baghdad.

Hodges said the number of cases of food-borne illness in U.S. personnel is hard to track. Preventive medicine officials estimate between 100 and 450 soldiers in Iraq may be sick each week from food and water sources.

But the number of sick soldiers is tough to put a number on for a couple of reasons, Hodges said. Many illnesses, such a stomach

virus, pass so quickly that soldiers may not seek treatment.

Other maladies such as hydatid — which comes from meat or water contaminated with the tapeworm egg — usually go unnoticed for its incubation period of 12 months to many years. It involves slow-growing tumors that can reach grapefruit size and cause organ dysfunction or other complications if the cysts are ruptured.

In other words, a soldier from the first rotation of Operation Iraqi Freedom who ate at local restaurants may not be showing symptoms yet. Treatment involves surgically removing the large cysts and following up with tapeworm medication, Hodges said.

To be safe, soldiers should only eat at the U.S. dining facilities or Army and Air Force Exchange Service restaurants, he said. Even Iraqi restaurants located within U.S. controlled areas, such as the Green Zone in Baghdad, are not approved eating places for U.S. troops.

Veterinary services soldiers check food for the U.S. dining facilities at shipping plants in places such as Kuwait and Australia and at warehouses where the food is stored.

Bound for trouble

Food-borne illnesses found in the Middle East, and their symptoms.

■ **Hydatid Disease** — Common source is contaminated red meat, but also found in water. Symptoms include large cysts that grow over a period of 12 months to many years. The disease can go undetected for many years.

■ **Vibrio vulnificus** — Common sources are raw oysters or shellfish. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain in healthy people. Those with liver disease may experience acute fever, chills. It can lead to septic shock.

■ **Cholera** — Common source is contaminated water. Primary symptom is liquid stool.

■ **Salmonella** — Common sources are undercooked eggs, beef or poultry or contaminated food preparation surfaces. Symptoms are fever, diarrhea and abdominal cramping.

Preventive Medicine personnel inspect the food at the dining-facility level and at AAFES restaurants to ensure proper preparation methods are being followed and food-service personnel are using good personal hygiene, Hodges said.

Neither Veterinary Services nor Preventive Medicine inspects local restaurants, however.

An Iraqi Ministry of Health division inspects the restaurants, but Hodges said inspectors are not as well trained as Army inspectors.

"There is nothing prepared in Iraq [restaurants] that has had any oversight by the Army whatsoever," Hodges said. "There are zero approved food sources in Iraq."

Additionally, since beef and lamb, favorite meats among Iraqis, are very expensive, restaurants may look for cheaper and less sanitary sources for the meats, Hodges said. "Beef at a restaurant may actually be a mixture of beef and who knows what," Hodges said.

And as tempting as they may

appear, even fruit and vegetable stands may harbor disease.

"Hard-skinned fruits are not a big problem, unless they are organically fertilized," Hodges said. The process, popular in some parts of Asia, involves using human feces as fertilizer for fruit and vegetables.

"There are just no checks and balances [on food sold on the economy]," he said.

There are also no approved water sources in Iraq, despite efforts by Veterinary Services and Preventive Medicine to locate one.

"The water keeps coming up with fecal contaminants," he said. Hodges said these problems have been around since before the war, and cited one case where an underground sewer pipe was somehow crossed directly with a pipe that brought drinking water to a restaurant.

While troops may get tired of the dining facility or Burger King, trying something different at a local restaurant may not be worth the risk.

"Always eat at approved dining facilities or [AAFES restaurants]," Hodges said. "Anytime soldiers eat on the economy, they're rolling the dice."

Email Rick Emert at: emert@mid.estripes.osd.mil



Hodges

U.S. military families begin leaving Bahrain following terrorist threats

BY ADNAN MALIK
The Associated Press

MANAMA, Bahrain — U.S. military families have begun leaving Bahrain by the dozens, complying with a formal order to depart following reports that terrorists were planning attacks here, a spokesman for the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet said Saturday.

Cmdr. James Graybeal said dozens of family members were flown out on a U.S.-bound military flight late Friday.

"We have begun the relocation of our family members. We expect the process to take a few weeks to complete," Graybeal said.

Citing security reasons, he refused to say exactly how many people traveled on Friday's flight, bound for the naval station in Norfolk, Va. He would not say when the next flight would depart but said the evacuation would be completed this month.

Friday's flight was the first evacuation since the formal departure orders came during July 4 celebrations last Sunday, two days after the Pentagon announced the first such mandatory evacuation from this U.S. ally in the Gulf where the U.S. Navy has had a presence for more than 50 years.

"People are very sad to see their families go, but they know this is an important mission and we are very committed to continue our mission and do our work," Graybeal said.

He said the orders affected 420 families, or about 930 people, who are relatives of servicemembers or Defense Department staff.

On July 1, the State Department cautioned Americans against traveling to Bahrain and advised Americans who live there to leave because of information that extremists were planning attacks.

The Pentagon said a day later that it was withdrawing servicemembers' families from Bahrain for at least 30 days. The State Department added last Saturday it had authorized the voluntary departure of family members and non-emergency employees of the U.S. Embassy in Bahrain.

The State Department has provided no details on the information it has about possible terror attacks on Americans in Bahrain.

Bahrain has stepped up security on the 15-mile causeway linking it to Saudi Arabia, which has seen a series of attacks on Americans and other Westerners living there. Some here have expressed fears that Saudi militants, under pressure from their security forces, might see Bahrain as an easier place to attack Westerners.

The Saudi violence has been blamed on members of or sympathizers to al-Qaida, the network of anti-Western Muslim extremists blamed for the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States. Al-Qaida has vowed to topple the Saudi royal family, accusing it of being too close to the United States and insufficiently Islamic.

The Bahraini king, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, also is close to the United States. Sheikh Hamad was one of the few Arab leaders to accept an invitation to last month's Group of Eight summit in the United States, where a U.S. initiative to encourage democratization in the Arab world was unveiled.

"People are very sad to see their families go, but they know this is an important mission and we are very committed to continue our mission and do our work."

Cmdr. James Graybeal
Spokesman for the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet

New dad moves heaven and earth



FAMILY PHOTO VIA THE NATCHEZ DEMOCRAT/AP



Above: Marine Lance Cpl. Patrick Krueger talks on a satellite phone from his base outside Baghdad with his wife, Jessica, as she was in labor with their first child in Natchez, Miss., last week.

Left: New mother Jessica Krueger kisses the forehead of her newborn son, Landon Patrick Krueger, on Thursday. Landon's father, Lance Cpl. Krueger, used all the technology he could muster from the military and from family in Natchez to share in the moment by telephone and e-mail.

THE NATCHEZ DEMOCRAT/AP

Intelligence report could hurt Bush at polls

By DANA MILBANK and WALTER PINCUS

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Friday's report by the Senate Intelligence Committee left in shreds two of the Bush administration's main rationales for the war in Iraq: that Iraq had illicit weapons and that it cooperated with al-Qaida.

The conclusions are not earthshaking by themselves.

Though President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have not abandoned either rationale, both were already tattered after months by U.S. weapons inspectors in Iraq, the commission prob-

ing the Sept. 11 attacks, CIA officials and others. The larger question is whether voters will blame the White House for these massive mistakes. Though officially agnostic on the White House role in using Iraq intelligence (that will come in a later report), the committee gives ammunition to both Bush and Democratic opponent John Kerry.

On the question of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, the bipartisan committee report absolved administration officials of pressuring CIA analysts to inflate the case against Saddam Hussein. And while making no judgment on whether the administration distorted the intelligence it was given, the committee made plain that the CIA's case against Iraq was plenty exaggerated on its own. Without "any evidence" of administration coercion, the committee found, the intelligence community's judgments on Iraq's weapons were "either overstated, or were not supported by, the underlying intelligence reporting."

On Iraq's relationship to al-Qaida, however, the committee's findings imply that the White House, not the CIA, is to blame for making dubious claims that there were working ties between Osama bin Laden's organization and Saddam's Iraq. "The Central Intelligence Agency reasonably assessed that there were likely several instances of contacts between Iraq and al-Qaida throughout the 1990s, but that these contacts did not add up to an established formal relationship," the panel found, echoing the Sept. 11 commission staff's find-

ing of no "collaborative relationship" between the two.

"The [CIA's] assessment that to date there was no evidence proving Iraqi complicity or assistance in an al-Qaida attack was reasonable and objective. No additional information has emerged to suggest otherwise."

The undermining of the case for war is potentially a grave threat to Bush, whose re-election prospects are closely tied to Americans' view of the merits of the Iraq war and whether it advances the fight against terrorism.

In the meantime, he continues to assert ties between al-Qaida and Iraq, and to place blame for any weapons miscalculation squarely on the CIA.

Bush's distancing of himself from the flawed allegations will be aided by the departure last week of CIA Director George Tenet, who was criticized in the Senate report for not always being informed about dissenting views when he met almost daily with Bush.

Democrats, in turn, are determined not to let Bush avoid blame. On Friday, the Kerry campaign issued a statement saying: "Nothing in this report absolves the White House of its responsibility for mishandling of the country's intelligence. The fact is that when it comes to national security, the buck stops at the White House, not anywhere else."

A senior intelligence official speaking on condition of anonymity agreed with that logic Friday, saying the CIA's assertions, whatever their accuracy, did not in themselves justify

going to war; the agency made no recommendation on this. "Policy-makers should not be immune from the decision on what to do," the official said.

The Senate panel's Republican chairman Friday said the findings that left the White House blameless, while the Democratic vice chairman said that the CIA was right to dismiss the notion of al-Qaida ties to Iraq.

"Before the war, the U.S. intelligence community told the president, as well as the Congress and the public, that Saddam Hussein had stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, and if left unchecked, would probably have a nuclear weapon during this decade," chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan., said in summarizing the report. "Well, today we know these assessments were wrong, and as our inquiry will show, they were also unreasonable and largely unsupported by the available intelligence."

Vice Chairman Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., found a different point of emphasis: "Our report found that the intelligence community's judgments were right on Iraq's ties to terrorists, which is an administration's conclusions were wrong, and that is, of the relationship, the formal relationship, however you want to describe it, between Iraq and al-Qaida."

Even Friday, after the committee report, Bush said Saddam's Iraq provided safe haven for an "al-Qaida affiliate." A Cheney spokesman said Friday that the committee findings are consistent with administration claims.

"Our report found that the intelligence community's judgments were right on Iraq's ties to terrorists, which is another way of saying that the administration's conclusions were wrong."



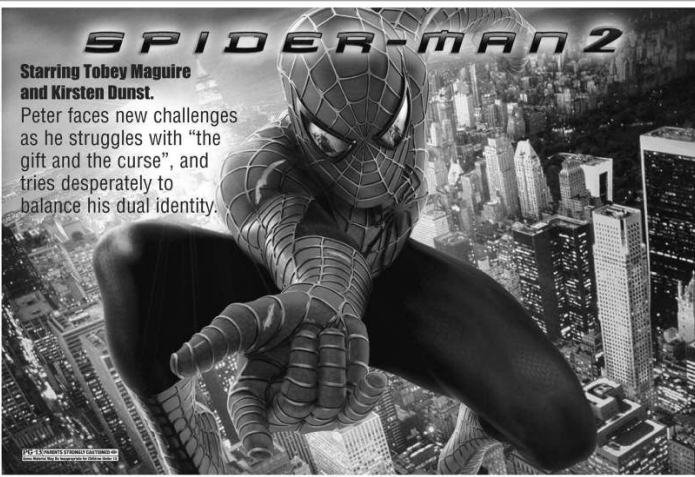
Jay Rockefeller
West Virginia Democrat and vice chairman
of the Senate Intelligence Committee

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Darmstadt	13-19 Aug
Dexheim	30 Jul-5 Aug
Friedberg	27 Aug - 2 Sep
Giebelstadt	13-19 Aug
Grafenwöhr	23-29 Jul
Hannau	16-22 Jul
Heidelberg	23-29 Jul
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Lakehurst	23-29 Jul
Mannheim	16-22 Jul
Mildenhall	16-22 Jul
Ramstein Hercules	30 Jul-5 Aug
Ramstein Nightingale	23-29 Jul
Rhein Main	6-12 Aug
Spangdahlem	13-19 Aug
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Showtimes are subject to change. Please check your local theater or aafes.com to verify show dates.

FIRST RUN THEATERS

Missing Marine starts German debriefing

BY MARNI MCENTE

Stars and Stripes

LANDSTUHL, Germany — A U.S. Marine missing for 18 days from his post in Iraq was "very exhausted," but otherwise in good physical health after being admitted to a U.S. military hospital in Germany, military physicians said Friday.

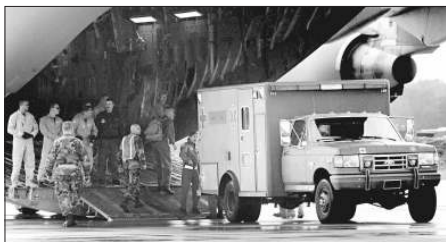
Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun, 24, who was believed to have been captured by Iraqi insurgents before turning up Thursday in Beirut, where his family lives, had suffered from migraine headaches and insomnia during his absence, said Lt. Col. Sally Harvey, a clinical psychologist at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. Harvey flew to Beirut and accompanied Hassoun to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, where he landed Friday night. Hassoun was admitted to the nearby military hospital at 7:35 p.m.

"His spirits are good. He's glad to be back. He is very tired," Harvey said during an 11 p.m. news conference at the hospital.

Hassoun was to undergo a three-to-five-day repatriation process, during which the military would gather information "to prevent like circumstances from happening again," Harvey said.

Cite said Hassoun had not discussed the circumstances of his absence, but she expected that such details would emerge during a debriefing process that would start Saturday. Intelligence experts and Search, Evacuation, Resistance and Escape specialists will conduct the debriefing.

"We want to give him a chance to tell his story. That will happen tomorrow," Harvey said.



An ambulance allegedly carries Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun after arriving on a C-17 aircraft at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Friday. The U.S. Marine, who vanished in a reported kidnapping in Iraq and resurfaced in Beirut more than two weeks later, will reportedly be brought to nearby Landstuhl Medical Center for a medical check.

The circumstances of Hassoun's absence are still murky.

He had contacted U.S. Embassy officials in Beirut, accompanied by his family members, who are from Tripoli, according to news reports.

He had last been seen on Arab television on June 27, blindfolded with someone holding a sword above his head. Conflicting reports of the details of his capture and possible murder had circulated in the news media for days before Hassoun arrived in Lebanon.

He disappeared June 20 from a Marine

camp near Fallujah, where he worked as a truck driver and translator for the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, initially had listed Hassoun as a deserter, but changed that listing to "captured" after the videotape was aired, Marine Maj. Tim Keefe, a spokesman for the service's Europe command, said at the news conference.

As of Friday, Hassoun was not under guard or being confined while at the hospital, Keefe said.

Any further investigation will not take place until after the repatriation process, Keefe said.

"The focus is not on the investigation. The focus is making sure he is healthy," Keefe said. During the repatriation process, however, Hassoun is granted confidentiality for any statements he makes, Harvey said.

"The information will not be used against him," she said.

Hassoun likely will be returned to Camp Lejeune after he is released from the hospital "to return to normal duty and a normal life," Keefe said.

Harvey said Hassoun told her he hadn't slept more than two or three hours a night for three weeks.

The 6-foot tall Hassoun dropped from 190 to 170 pounds during that time, said Navy Commander Peter Macro, a Landstuhl physician.

"He is in excellent physical condition, with no bruises or other injuries," Macro said. Doctors were treating Hassoun only with a sleeping pill to help him rest, he said.

Hassoun will remain at the hospital "for a few days," hospital commander Col. Rhonda Cornum said.

Doctors at Landstuhl have treated other released American hostages since the war in Iraq began last year. Pvt. Jessica Lynch was treated there in April and civilian Thomas Hamilton in May.

Cornum, a flight surgeon during the first Gulf War, was captured in 1991 after her Black Hawk helicopter was shot down. She and two other crew members were released after about a week.

E-mail Marni McEntee at McEntee@mail.strips.esd.mil

Friends remember Hassoun as polite, loyal, smitten young man

BY ROBERT TANNER

The Associated Press

Visiting a club packed with California girls, he was smitten by a teen with a T-shirt that declared her love for Lebanon. At an American pizza shop near his Marine base, Wassef Ali Hassoun's favorite pie was made with zaatar, a Middle Eastern herb.

Now the Marine corporal with a deep affection for his native land is caught up in a tangled story in which the latest twist is his safe arrival Thursday at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, 18 days after he went missing from Iraq, and subsequent journey to a U.S. military hospital in Germany.

Friends and relatives testify to his warmth, loyalty and politeness — though his immediate family has said little. The silence has left more questions than answers about the 24-year-old translator who at one point was reported slain by captors.

"He's a really, really nice guy, a very genuine person. The whole area about him is very respectful," said Nicholas Merzi, an 18-year-old southern Californian who caught Hassoun's eye at a club last winter.

While pursuing her, the Marine was embraced by her entire family.

The news about Hassoun has been contradictory and confusing. Islamic militant groups said he had been abducted and threatened with execution, then that he had been beheaded — and



Eighteen-year-old Nicholas Merzi looks up at a poster of family friend Marine Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun in Oceanside, Calif., last month. Hassoun, 24, had courted Nicholas when he was stationed nearby.

then announced that he had not. Military sources told news organizations they may have deserted, or been lured away from his base and then betrayed, and then raised the possibility that the entire kidnapping could be a hoax.

The story of his life before Iraq is only slightly clearer.

Born and raised in Lebanon during its civil war in the 1980s, he came to the United States in the late '90s and joined family, including at least one brother, in the Salt Lake City suburb of West Jordan, according to Judy Hassoun, the

ex-wife of an older brother. A member of the Hassoun clan in Tripoli, Lebanon, said the same.

Before coming to America, he studied at the Evangelical School of Tripoli and later learned translation at a technical school.

Hassoun attended the 2000 summer and fall sessions of Salt Lake Community College. In 2002, he joined the Marines as a motor vehicle operator, though he worked as a translator. He has become a U.S. citizen, the Marines say.

Judy Hassoun, who was married to Hassoun's older brother until 1998, said she remembered him as "very brave, very loving," and a good student who "always wanted to get good grades."

A distant cousin in Tripoli, Abdullah Hassoun, said that Wassef Ali Hassoun had been married in Lebanon several months ago, though Wassef wasn't present — his father stood in for him to sign the marriage contract, which is allowed in Islam. And a neighbor in Tripoli said he married an American woman two years ago, but they divorced.

But for the Merzi family in Oceanside, Calif., near San Diego, the man whose picture they've pasted up on the wall of their pizza place poses no mystery.

Hassoun became part of a group of Arabic-speaking Marines who frequented their pizza shop, Spanky's, during a few months last winter when they were stationed nearby before the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force

went back to Iraq.

The shop and the family that ran it offered a comforting taste of home, especially when the father, a native of Lebanon, made pizza with zaatar.

"All of them were like, 'Thank you, we haven't eaten this since our mothers made it,'" said Michele Lisi-Merzi, whose love for Marines was homegrown — her father was a staff sergeant, and she spent 10 years as a girl living at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Hassoun stood out from the group because of his shy yet insistent courtship of Nicholas.

The two met at a nearby club — she asked him to dance — and then he tracked her down. When he wanted a date, he followed the traditions of his homeland.

"I've never gone out with a guy who asked my parents before me to go out on a date," Nicholas said.

That was their only date "solo," Nicholas said. But he spent lots of time at Spanky's, hanging around

after hours talking. He also helped with the move when Nicholas went off to college at California State University, Northridge.

The mother said Hassoun made it clear he wanted to marry Nicholas. Michele explained that, in America, it's not up to the parents, though she and her husband encouraged Hassoun to continue his friendship with their daughter. He kept up an e-mail correspondence with Nicholas while he was in Iraq.

Now that he's free and safe, the family was sure the truth of Hassoun's loyalty and bravery would be seen clearly.

Messages of Support

I teach 3rd grade in Rockport, Texas. The kids aren't asking as much about the details of the war as they are about the soldiers themselves being safe. My class and I are thinking good thoughts and prayers for you, and hoping that this will be over soon so that you may return home.

This is a message to all of the troops who are fighting and overseas. You are in my family's thoughts and prayers and thanks so much for what you do. God bless you all. We Americans stand behind you. Renee, Jacksonville, FL

Messages of Support

To SPC P. Lemon. This comes to you with much love and support. I'll always be here for you, my love, always. I miss you, stay strong Godspeed! Your loving wife Kate (your Butterfly)

Human rights minister faces daunting task

Kurdish leader must look into Iraq's grim record and overcome enemies to cleanse the country of atrocities

BY HAMZA HENDAWI

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq's new human rights minister must be the most potent symbol of post-war Iraq: a member of a long-oppressed minority who has a unique opportunity to prove that Iraqis can put aside ethnic and religious rivalries to come together as a nation.

It's an extremely difficult task for anyone, especially a Kurd like Bakhtiyar Amin, to delve into the complex and grim world of Iraq's human rights record — a catalogue of gruesome atrocities committed over 35 years of Baath Party rule during which Saddam Hussein played a key role.

In an interview, Amin said Iraqis must overcome enemies that include religious fanatics, remnants of Saddam's regime and neighboring countries that don't want to see Iraq become democratic.

"I want to help in the creation of a harmonious society," he said. "It will not be easy and it will take time, but we are determined."

Iraq is brimming with violence and instability. Sectarian tensions also have surfaced in the 15 months since Saddam was toppled, and a new political order

that followed has deepened divisions between the country's major ethnic and religious groups.

As a Kurd, he is a member of a community that was brutally oppressed by Saddam. Kurds are now widely viewed in Iraq as the Americans' best friends — something of a stigma in a country where most people deeply resent

rights minister. Amin's Cabinet post symbolizes the spirit of a new Iraq committed to democratic values.

Amin proudly declares, for example, that there are 1,500 humanitarian agencies in Iraq, excluding Kurdish areas.

"Of course, some of them are fronts for foreign intelligence agencies, but the majority are genuine NGOs," he said with a smile. "There is no turning back now for Iraq."

Amin does not hide his deep felt gratitude to the United States for providing the security that allowed the Kurds to establish a de facto autonomous region in northern Iraq in 1991. He also dismisses any suggestion that he is likely to defend the rights of non-Kurdish Iraqis with less conviction than he would for fellow Kurds.

"I have been a human rights activist for quite a long time. I defended the rights of every single community and Iraqi citizen across ethnic, religious and geographic boundaries and affiliations," he said in a firm voice.

Amin, married to the daughter of a tribal Shiite chief who was killed by suspected Saddam agents in 1994, said that since taking office he has persuaded the

"I want to help in the creation of a harmonious society. It will not be easy and it will take time, but we are determined."

Bakhtiyar Amin

Iraq's new human rights minister

the United States.

His office, on the ground floor of a three-story building in Baghdad's upscale Mansour area, is ringed by concrete blast barriers. Visitors are searched thoroughly by armed guards, and he travels in an armored car. He says the ministry has been the target of insurgent attacks at least once.

"There is no other way to deal with the security threats," he said. "One mistake can be very costly. I have 200 people working in this building."

Yemen is the only Arab nation besides Iraq to have a human



Iraq Human Rights Minister Bakhtiyar Amin pauses while speaking to a reporter during an interview on Thursday in Baghdad. Amin, a Kurd, has the overwhelming job of digging into the grim human rights record in Iraq and making large changes and forging a new policies.

U.S. military in charge of the infamous Abu Ghraib prison west of Baghdad to introduce a series of reforms and privileges.

These include twice-monthly visits by inmates' families, new uniforms, upgrading the medical care available to inmates, and separating juveniles from the rest of the prison population.

Disclosures in April that Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib were abused and sexually humiliated by U.S. soldiers robbed the American occupation of its moral authority and whipped up anti-U.S. sentiments among Iraqis.

"If I am not allowed to visit Abu Ghraib, then I won't take the job,"

Amin recalled saying when invited to join the Cabinet.

His key public appearance since taking office came Wednesday at a news conference to announce emergency laws giving interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi sweeping powers to fight insurgents and terrorism.

He defended the laws, saying they had enough built-in checks to prevent a return to methods used by Saddam. He acknowledged in the AP interview, however, that he was concerned about the conduct of the security forces in implementing the measures.

"We need to educate our forces in the principles of human rights," he said.

Stars and Stripes

Messages of Support

Dear Men and Women of the Military:

★ Thank you for your sacrifice and for dedicating your lives to making this a safer country and world. You are in our thoughts today and every day. We pray for you safe and speedy return. God Bless You. Your friends in Louisiana. Mo Evans

★ Despite my government's decision not to become directly involved in the Iraqi conflict, I still feel a need to send a message of support and Blessings to the brave men & women of the US military. Please know that as a Canadian I consider the United States a great and true friend. I have been privileged to work in the US for many years and I have a tremendous affinity with the good hearts and souls of the American people.

My wish is that all the American's overseas supporting their government do their jobs very, very well; fix the problems once and for all; and come home safely to their loved ones. Please know that you are in our collective thoughts and prayers. My Anglican priest has special prayer vigils for the US troops in Iraq. Just know that you have overwhelming support for your safe return. God's Speed, L. Ford. Proud Canadian - Toronto, Ontario

★ I am just a person in u.s.a writing a big thank you to anyone who is reading this letter about how I feel about the troops I Iraq. thank you very much for fighting for the freedom of us and the people in Iraq.

★ Thank you to all who are there fighting for our country. You are all greatly appreciated and you have a lot of support from everyone. To PFC Clark...I love you and can't wait for you to come home. Just stay safe and remember that I am waiting for your safe return home. A special thanks to 3 ID!!!!!! Jimmie I love you! love mary

★ Please know that we are praying for your safe return. We support you! We know you will make us proud. Katherine. Dublin, CA

★ You are serving your country well and expect for the ignorant protesters we appreciate what you are doing. Fight hard for your families and America. An ex-Marine Charlie. Oregon

American arrested in Afghanistan has record of federal fraud in States

The Associated Press

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. — An American arrested in Afghanistan for abusing inmates in a private jail he set up in Kabul spent three years in federal prison himself for a fraud conviction.

Jonathan Keith Idema of Fayetteville, N.C., was also ordered to repay the 60 companies he swindled out of more than \$200,000. Idema was one of three Americans and four Afghans who were taken into custody by Afghan authorities, who say the seven were on a self-appointed counterterrorism mission that included hanging the eight prisoners by their feet.

Afghan officials dismissed Idema's claims that he was a "special adviser" to their security forces. The U.S. government also disavowed any connection with the men.

In North Carolina, Idema was accused a decade ago of setting up a fake business, United Manufacturing Co., to get supplies for a financially troubled business, Idema Combat Systems. Companies were never paid by the goods. Idema Combat Systems

made vests, pouches and other lightweight gear for the military and industry.

He was convicted in 1994 of 58 counts of using telephones and fax machines to commit fraud, and conspiracy. Idema contended the scam was undertaken by his employees.

Before sentencing, Boyle ordered Idema to undergo psychological testing. Court records show that evaluators concluded Idema had no mental illness, but suffered a "personality disorder which would affect his interaction with persons exhibiting similar traits, such as supervisors, attorneys, doctors, judges and other persons in positions of power or authority."

U.S.-German ties slowly coming undone

Millions of GIs have enjoyed stays in Germany, but with drawdown expected, the warm sentiment fostered in the Cold War era may fade

BY HARRY LEVINS
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

As part of a worldwide reshuffle of military forces, the Pentagon is expected to announce this month a dramatic drawdown in the ranks of the 71,000 soldiers and airmen stationed in Germany.

Some people say the loss to Germany will go way past the money that the GIs spend in beer halls. These specialists in German-American relations say that in the coming decades, the cutback will remove from American society some of Germany's best friends.

The thinking: Paring back the military ranks in Germany will all but dry up a stream that has flowed for almost six decades.

This stream takes young Americans into military service, floats them to Germany for a year and a half or more, bobs them back to the United States and finally washes them ashore into civilian life.

Almost universally, they enjoyed their time in Germany.

"It was the centerpiece of my military career," says retired Army Maj. Gen. William L. Nash, now with the Council on Foreign Relations. "It was hard soldiering and good times."

In theory, at least, the good times and good memories give Germany a big pool of boosters in America, the world's richest and most powerful nation. No other foreign nation enjoys such an asset.

That draws a nod from Charles Moskos of Northwestern University. He served there as a draftee in the 1950s and now specializes in the sociology of the armed forces.

Duty in Japan or Korea rarely evoked such good feelings, Moskos said. "Remember, a GI in Japan or Korea was even richer, comparatively, than a GI in Germany," he said. "But you don't get the same degree of sympathy from them that you get from the guys who served in Germany."

Even years after their time as soldiers, those service men and women speak of Germany with nostalgia and affection. Just ask St. Louis' Theresa Eisele, a German native.

For three decades, until the mid-1990s, Eisele ran the old Bavarian Inn on Arsenal Street near



JOHN MILLAR/Stars and Stripes

A gathering of more than 5,000 German demonstrators snake their way through the streets of Kitzingen in 1991 to show support for America's involvement in the Gulf War. But times have changed, and Germany does not support the current U.S.-led war in Iraq.

Gravois Avenue. On summer Saturday nights, perhaps a third of the crowd jamming the picnic tables in her outdoor beer garden consisted of ex-GIs, swilling beer and swaying to the oompah-pah music.

"And I never talked to one who didn't like Germany," Eisele says.

Nationally, the Pentagon is unable to say how many Americans in uniform have had the chance to experience Germany.

Northwestern's Moskos estimates the total at 5 million since the end of World War II. At the

German Embassy in Washington, spokesman Oliver Schramm offers a figure of 15 million but con-

cedes that the estimate is just a guess.

Whatever the number, Moskos says, "It's darned near universal among veterans that serving in

Germany was a positive experience."

Military writer Ralph Peters served three tours in Germany and says, "It gave us exposure to a foreign culture, and the living was nice."

Nash remembers what the experience did for his young soldiers: "It taught them about a different part of the world — you know, learning how to ski, and practicing drink-

ing beer."

At St. Louis University, political scientist Tim Lomperis calls the presence of American sol-

diers in Germany "a great big people-to-people program, in a much less formal way. The military lets it happen with middle-class and blue-collar Americans, not just the intellectual class."

The positives have flowed in both directions.

"I don't know of any comprehensive studies," says Giles Hoyt, who directs the Max Kade German-American Center at Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis. "But intuitively, you'd think the American presence has had an enormously positive effect for Germany."

For one thing, Hoyt says, generations of Americans have willingly subsidized the military defense of Germany. He says the fact that so many ex-GIs enjoyed Germany has probably been crucial to this political support.

SEE GERMANY ON PAGE 9

"Right after World War II, the Germans were in the cosmic doghouse. It was tremendously to Germany's benefit to have American soldiers there. It bought Germany an amazing rapid pass on what the Germans had done — maybe TOO rapid."

Ralph Peters
military writer

Messages of Support

★ Hello My Love, Hope all is well wherever you are! Baby Gio and I miss you very much and praying for your safe return. My parents and your family send their love. Please do take care at all times. "I love you very much Daddy!" said Baby G. I love you and take care. Your wife, Jean Aguayo

★ My thoughts and prayers are with all the troops. May God's blessings constantly be with you and return you home quickly and safely. Carolyn R. Lewisville, Texas

★ God keep you safe and send you home soon to your ever loving and grateful country the good old USA

★ TO ALL ESPECIALLY H. HECTOR M. WE WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE YOU BY LETTING YOU KNOW THAT THEIR PEOPLE WHO PRAY FOR YOU DAY AND NIGHT AND YOU CAN DREAM OF COMING HOME SOON. THERE IS A SPECIAL PROTECTION OVER YOUR LIVES.

Germany: Decades of relations cooling off

GERMANY, FROM PAGE 9

Hoyt gets a second from German native Gerhard Weinberg of the University of North Carolina, who teaches German diplomatic history.

Weinberg says that in large part, Americans put up with the cost of defending Germany "because all across America, soldiers who came back from Germany and got out of the Army and went back into civilian life did NOT tell their friends, families and neighbors, 'I had an awful time in that terrible place.' Instead, most of them spoke warmly and positively."

And military writer Peters sees another big plus for Germany.

"Right after World War II, the Germans were in the cosmic doghouse," he says. "It was tremendously to Germany's benefit to have American soldiers there. It bought Germany an amazingly rapid pass on what the Germans had done — maybe TOO rapid."

North Carolina's Weinberg says, "Ironically, the Germans themselves have never understood this benefit. The fact is, there are large numbers of Americans — many of them from segments of society that do not ordinarily travel abroad — who provided a reservoir of good will for Germany all across America."

But the level of that reservoir has dropped. In 1962, a tense time in the Cold War, perhaps 350,000 Americans were serving in Germany.

Now, only a fifth of that number live there — and that number could shrink again soon that number could shrink even more, also shrinking any advantage to Germany.



KEN GEORGE/Stars and Stripes

To demonstrate solidarity with allies, members of the Jewish Student Initiative in Frankfurt, Germany, wave American flags, display pro-American and anti-Nazi slogans while chanting "yeh-yeh USA" during a pro-American demonstration near the entrance of the American Consulate in this Jan. 25, 1991, photo.

"The people of Germany never grasped this," Weinberg says. "Now, with large numbers of American soldiers already gone, they're at least starting to think about it."

In the 1950s and early '60s, Peters says, "the U.S. Army had a love affair with Germany. It showed up back home in pop culture, with hit songs like 'Danke Schon,' 'Auf Wiedersehen' and 'Fraulein.'"

In recent decades, the relationship has lost some of its warm-and-fuzzy feeling. For one

thing, a weaker dollar has made life less fun for GIs.

"There's a big difference between 4 marks to the dollar and 1.6 marks to the dollar," says Army Col. Jay Parker, who teaches international affairs at West Point and who served in Germany for four-plus years.

Peters says that as Germans prospered, they began to look with disdain on soldiers.

"Their own army wasn't very good," he says, "and they translated that to us. They started calling all soldiers 'Versager' — a failure."

West Point's Parker says that by the '80s, young Germans had come to terms with their own country's history and were challenging the United States on issues ranging from the strategic (the deployment of missiles) to the mundane (the disruption caused by tanks on maneuvers).

Most recently, Germany's refusal to support the war in Iraq has chilled feelings, Peters says. "The Germans blindsided us. That produced a spurned-lover reaction."

Still, says Indianapolis' Hoyt, "France, not Germany, took most of the American criticism in the neck. And I think much of that goes back to the positive feelings for Germany."

Others have their doubts. Among them is political scientist James Davis of Washington University. Although he enjoyed his stint as a soldier in Germany in 1959-60, he questions whether the collective GI experience has made much of a mark on the big picture of international relations.

Davis says any edge for Germany might well result "from lots of immigrants in this country coming from Germany. And don't forget Germany's contributions to Western culture, music and religion — Martin Luther. If Germany has an edge, it is very broadly based."

Moskos says "German-Americans are the largest single ethnic group in the country. So even though Germany was on the wrong side in two world wars,

there was a common cultural compatibility" — one that extended way past nostalgic ex-GIs.

Still, says Moskos, "It wouldn't have occurred to the same degree without the GIs."

Another professor at the University of North Carolina, military historian Richard H. Kohn, says a sharp cutback in the number of GIs in Germany will carry a cost for the United States — "the abandonment of a powerful human tie with the most powerful European nation, a nation right in the middle of Europe."

And at St. Louis University, Lomperis takes a view that stretches far beyond the United States and Germany.

He says the GIs "represent a reservoir of support not just for

Germany but also for Atlantic ties through NATO."

As Lomperis puts it: "Remember, NATO is more than a military alliance. It's an Atlantic community. And maintaining a permanent American garrison in Europe is a way of solidifying the foundations of this community."

In the Balkans, U.S. troops get few chances to get friendly. Americans who have served as soldiers in Bosnia and Kosovo come home with no memories of wine, women and song.

The reason: That's because security concerns keep them cooped up on post when they're off duty. Unlike their fellow GIs in Germany, the soldiers in the Balkans are barred from wandering into town to sample the local beer and chat up the local women — or in the case of female soldiers, the local members of the opposite sex.

The rules date back to late-December 1995, when then-Maj. Gen. William L. Nash rolled his German-based 1st Armored Division into Bosnia. He took no chances that one of his soldiers would get killed — or even hurt — in some Bosnian bar.

At a news conference in January 1996, somebody asked Nash when he'd open the front gate and let some soldiers loose. He answered, "It's too soon to talk about going downtown."

It still is. Off-duty American soldiers in the Balkans — now just a few National Guard battalions — remain penned up inside their barbed-wire, no-beer bases.

These days, Nash works in Washington for the Council on Foreign Relations. In an interview, he conceded that perhaps the Army could ease up a bit on its soldiers in the Balkans.

But he doubts whether a more lax looser nighttime policy would someday form a pool of ex-GIs with fond memories of the threadbare Balkans.

"Remember," Nash said, "Bosnia ain't Germany."

Messages of Support

★ Hi, My name is Alicia Karl, and I want to do everything I can possibly can to do support the U.S. groups on the battle fields with Iraq!!!!!! If there is anything that I can do for 11 years old...I will do it!! thank you..... I support the U.S.!

~Alicia.K.Karl~

Messages of Support

★ To Wes Maroney, You're prayed for daily. We thank you for serving our country & we pray God will bring you home safely. We appreciate you & all your fellow soldiers very much. It is the soldier doing their job that allows us to have freedom in America. As National Police Week & Peace Officers Memorial Day are coming up in less than two months we will be remembering you as we dress the dog statue up again to honor all law enforcement. Blessings, Jill & Truett T. Santa Barbara, CA

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GUS SCHUETLER/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. Elvis Presley poses for a photo as he signs autographs for local residents in Friedberg, Germany, in 1960. Presley brought superstar glitz to Germany during his tour there.

Mildenhall airmen took Iraqis to heart

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — During Staff Sgt. Michael Lecluyse's time in Iraq — a period that stretched just beyond 100 days — one incident stands out.

It was the time at a hospital operated by South Koreans at the base's edge that he saw a little Iraqi girl the same age as his daughter, Delaney, 2, marked by the evidence of shrapnel wounds.

"I left in tears," said Lecluyse, who is a supply trooper for the 100th Communications Squadron. "I never went back."

Thirty-eight members of the squadron formed a Theater Deployable Communication Team for a mission to Tallil Air Base in southern Iraq. They returned to England two weeks ago.

Lecluyse and Airman 1st Class Jeremie Proctor spoke about the mission during their final day of time off on Friday. The team's mission was to upgrade the base's communications gear, which they did, improving the security of the network and doubling the bandwidth.

The air base is not a headline in the news from Iraq. That's good, of course. The base has a share of the shelling and other problems that plague other camps, but nothing that is outstanding.

The two airmen weren't sure if they could discuss specific incidents, but they down-

played the danger they faced.

"It's nothing like Balad or places like that," said Proctor.

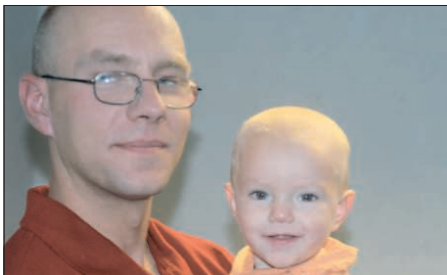
The base near Balad, north of Baghdad, is a frequent target of mortar attacks.

Proctor and Lecluyse said they

were sometimes required to wear flak vests and helmets, but not often. They were, however, required to have them handy.

A three-minute drive from the base is the town of an Nasiriyah, which is patrolled by Italian troops. It is normally a peaceful place, but not always.

"When you would see the Italians come barreling back in [to the base], you got a little scared," Proctor said. "Something had pushed them out of the city."



PHOTOS BY RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Above: Staff Sgt. Michael Lecluyse of the 100th Communications Squadron at RAF Mildenhall, England, said seeing a little girl wounded by shrapnel in Iraq made him think of his two children: 2-year-old Delaney and Kyle, 13 months — seen here in Daddy's arms. Left: Airman 1st Class Jeremie Proctor is proud of his unit's efforts to reach out to Iraqis.

"And they got pushed out quite a bit," said Lecluyse.

The Americans share the base with troops from a variety of nations — South Korea, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan and Croatia.

"We even had some Argentinians," said Lecluyse.

The Army has a major presence on the base. The two airmen seemed surprised when discussing how well they got along with their brethren in fatigues, who do one-year tours in the country.

Proctor said one soldier told him the Army troops measure their time in country by counting rotations of Air Force troops.

"We know when the third one's through, we're about ready to go home," Proctor said, quoting the soldier.

For Proctor, the hospital was a highlight of his time in Iraq.

The base created Operation Reach Out to provide Iraqi families visiting the hospital with some goodies, such as drinks and snacks.

"When you get the little kids coming up to you, tugging on your pants saying, 'Go USA,' it gives you a sense of pride," he said.

Glad to be home, the airmen said they were also glad to have the opportunity to serve. They also feel fortunate to have landed at Tallil.

"If they told me I could pick my base to go to in Iraq," Proctor said, "I'd pick Tallil."

E-mail Ron Jensen at: jensenr@mail.estrates.osd.mil

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Admiral: '04 Pulse is not a message

Officer says exercise tests Navy's capabilities, isn't signal to enemies

By ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States' largest naval exercise in decades, involving the deployment around the globe of seven of the Navy's 12 carrier battle groups, is not designed to send political signals to potential enemies, a senior Navy officer said Thursday.

"We're demonstrating to ourselves as much as to anybody else" what the Navy is capable of in times of crisis, said Rear Adm. John D. Stufflebeem, the Navy's chief of plans and operations.

"If others on the other side of a curtain will want to take lessons from that, I think that's advantageous," he said in an interview with a small group of reporters at the Pentagon. U.S. allies in Europe and elsewhere will feel reassured by the exercise, Stufflebeem said.

The carriers involved in the exercise, dubbed Summer Pulse '04, are the USS John C. Stennis, the USS George Washington, the USS John F. Kennedy, the USS Harry S. Truman, the USS Enterprise, and USS Ronald Reagan, and the Kitty Hawk.

Summer Pulse is the first test

of the Navy's new approach to managing its combat readiness. The Navy is abandoning its traditional approach of regularly scheduled, six-month deployments and instead will have ships and sailors prepared to go as world events demand.

The Navy wants to be able to send six carrier battle groups in less than 30 days to handle crises anywhere in the world, with two additional carrier groups ready to

"We're demonstrating to ourselves as much as to anybody else [what the Navy can do in times of crisis]."

Rear Adm. John D. Stufflebeem
Navy's chief of plans and operations

reservist in 1969 and is a 1975 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, said this is the first time in his career that the Navy has had as many as seven carriers deployed on an exercise around the globe. The previous high number, he said, was three.

During the initial stages of the Iraq war in 2003 the Navy had seven carriers operating in and around the Persian Gulf.

recommending Americans wishing to attend: Ride the train to Würzburg, then take the No. 2 streetcar to the fairgrounds, or park at Leighton Barracks and take the No. 28 and No. 14 bus to get to the train station.

Farmen takes over

MANNHEIM, Germany — Lt. Col. Stephen E. Farmen took the reins of the 28th Transportation Battalion — the largest transportation battalion in the Army — during a ceremony Tuesday at Coleman Barracks.

Farmen, who served as an actions officer in the Pentagon prior to coming to Germany, took over for Lt. Col. K.M. Grangfield, who is moving to 3rd Corps Support Command in Wiesbaden.

Farmen is married to the former Deborah Ulrich of Williamsport, Pa., according to an Army release.

From staff reports



USS John C. Stennis crewmembers pay their respects to the Battleship Missouri Memorial and Pearl Harbor from the deck of the Stennis last week in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The Stennis is part of Summer Pulse '04, an exercise involving seven aircraft-carrier battle groups to test the Navy's combat readiness.



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Volkfest continues

WÜRZBURG, Germany — The Würzburg area's biggest festival of the year continues this week at the city's Talavera parade grounds.

The 1,000-year-old Kiliani Volksfest began July 3, when Würzburg Lord Mayor Pia Beckmann tapped the festival's first beer keg, and will continue daily through July 19. It is named for the Irish saint Kilian, the patron saint of Franconia, and features a major carnival, booths, food and merchandise stands as well as daily live music. Rides are half price on family day, Wednesday.

The festival runs from 2 p.m. to midnight Monday through Thursday, 2 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday, and 1 p.m. to midnight Sunday.

Parking is scarce near the fairgrounds, so officials from the 417th Base Support Battalion are

IN THE STATES

Gay couples in N.J. register for more rights

New domestic partnership law allows some of same rights as married couples

BY KRISTA LARSON
The Associated Press

MAPLEWOOD, N.J. — Hundreds of same-sex couples gathered to register domestic partnerships on Saturday, the first day of a new law in New Jersey that gives gay partners some of the same rights as married couples.

More than 200 people attended a morning ceremony marking the law going into effect. Many arrived hours early, sitting on the municipal building's steps or on lawn chairs while filling out domestic partnership applications.

"This is a very great day in New Jersey's civil rights history," said Mayor Fred Profeta. "The civil rights achieved today are very important — don't anyone doubt that."

Some 40 applications, which attest to the signers being domestic partners, had been handed out as of 9:30 a.m. After completing the paperwork, couples planned to draw numbers to determine their place in a line to receive notarization.

Cathy Schenone arrived at 7:30 a.m. with her partner, Michele Tollefson, 46. "It kind of validates that we've been together 10 years and deserve the same rights as everyone else," said Schenone, 40, of Wanque.

The domestic partnership law, passed in January, grants some legal rights to registered couples, including the ability to make medical decisions for each other.

It allows partners to have some joint rights in filing state taxes, to be exempt from state inheritance taxes in the case

of a partner's death and to extend the benefits given to state employees to cover domestic partners.

The law also covers unmarried heterosexual couples ages 62 and older. It does not legalize gay marriage and offers far fewer rights than those given to heterosexual married couples.

Schenone said she was pleased with the new law because she can be added to her partner's health insurance policy. "There really are some great benefits to it," Schenone said. "Hopefully it will lead to marriage."

New Jersey is the fifth state in the nation to officially recognize same-sex coupling. In April, Maine's governor signed a bill creating domestic partnerships there.

Domestic partner benefits have been granted in California and Hawaii. Vermont has approved civil unions and Massachusetts recently legalized same-sex marriage.

Catholic and conservative groups have raised objections to the New Jersey law, but so far no lawsuits have been filed to block it, said Patrick DeAlmeida, a deputy state attorney general.

Maplewood was one of several municipalities with large gay populations that planned to open offices this weekend; most other towns didn't plan to start registering couples until Monday.

The South Orange clerk's office was opening at 12:01 a.m. Saturday to register couples.

Couples must bring government-issued identification and show proof of shared financial assets to a municipal registrar's office.



Marie-Elena Conte draws a ticket out of the fish bowl to wait for her number to be called to register for a Domestic Partnership certificate at the Maplewood Town Hall in Maple Wood, N.J., on Saturday.

Bush pushes gay marriage ban on radio

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush says legalizing gay marriage would redefine the most fundamental institution of civilization and that a constitutional amendment is needed to protect it.

A few activist judges and local officials have taken it on themselves to change the meaning of marriage. Bush said during his weekly radio address.

Leading the chorus of support for an amendment, Bush said, "If courts create their own arbitrary definition of marriage as a mere legal contract and cut marriage off from its cultural, religious and natural roots, then the meaning of marriage is lost and the institution is weakened."

His remarks follow the opening of Senate debate Friday on a constitutional amendment effectively banning gay marriage.

Reflecting the election-year sensitivity of the issue, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said Republicans are using the constitutional amendment as a bulletin board for campaign sloganeering.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, accused Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry of holding inconsistent positions.

Edwards: U.S. dragged feet on corporate suits

BY LIZ SIDOTI
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — John Edwards, the newly named Democratic vice presidential candidate, suggested that President Bush's administration dragged its feet in prosecuting alleged "corporate crooks" like the former Enron chief executive Kenneth Lay.

"It took three long years to see Ken Lay handcuffed and indicted for what he did," the North Carolina senator said Saturday in the weekly Democratic radio address. "In November, middle-class families will be able to rest assured that John Kerry will look out for their interests, restore corporate responsibility and put our economy back in line with our values."

He said that Kerry understands that families are struggling to stay afloat.

"You can't save any money because it takes every dime you make to just to pay your bills. And if something goes wrong, a serious illness, or a layoff, you go right off the cliff," he said.

Lay, a big political contributor whose largesse went mostly to Republicans, surrendered to authorities in Houston on Thursday and

declared his innocence of charges he fraudulently hid losses and debt problems at Enron. Lawyers indicted him Thursday after a 2 1/2-year investigation into the energy giant's collapse.

The Bush campaign said Friday that Lay attended a dinner at Kerry's Georgetown home "10 months after Enron went under" and that Lay had been on a board, the Heinz Foundation, overseen by Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry.

Kerry spokeswoman Stephanie Cutter said Kerry wasn't at the dinner; the foundation was philanthropic, and Lay is no longer on the board.

Edwards, named by Kerry to the Democratic ticket on Tuesday, gave a few more details about what transpired that morning when the Massachusetts senator called and offered him a spot on the ticket.

"After I said yes, I asked my 6-year-old, Emma Claire, and my 4-year-old, Jack, to tell their mom," Edwards said. "My daughter got on the phone and said, 'Mommy, Senator Kerry picked Daddy. And then Jack got on the phone and said something that he thought was more important.' 'Mommy, I can swim with my head above water!'"

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Kate Lawroski looks at a paint-by-numbers picture of 1960s group the Monkees at Chicago's Intuit gallery. The first paint-by-numbers pictures were created by World War II veteran Dan Robbins in the 1940s.

Paint-by-numbers inventor proudly looks back on craze

BY F.N. D'ALESSIO
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Long before Elvis's face first hit black velvet, the guardians of all that is good and serious in American art had something else to bewail.

This heresy was called paint-by-numbers, and Dan Robbins was its prophet.

Robbins created the first paint-by-numbers pictures in the late 1940s, then rode the craze through the boom years of the 1950s and the bust of the 1960s.

He was once embarrassed explaining what he did for a living when he met his old art teacher on the street, but Robbins can now look back on the paint-by-numbers phenomenon with pride.

The once-mocked paintings are a hot collectible on eBay, and Robbins, now 79, had the satisfaction of seeing his artworks — completed by others — hanging in the Smithsonian in Washington in 2001 and 2002.

He even wrote a book on his creations, "Whatever Happened to Paint-by-Numbers."

So it was with a mixture of vanity and self-deprecating humor that Robbins addressed an audience last week at Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art. One exhibition at the small but influential Chicago gallery, "Outside the Lines: Ordinary Pass-times, Extraordinary Art," celebrates hobbyist art, including paint-by-numbers oils.

Robbins said he had suspicions his artistic career was going to be odd when he first met his eventual employer, Max Klein of now-defunct Palmer Paint Inc. in Detroit.

Robbins was several years out of service in World War II, newly married and unemployed when he signed on with Klein to create a children's watercolor set.

The children's paint sets were selling reasonably well when Klein, noting the increasing leisure time of postwar Americans, asked Robbins to come up with a way to market the company's paint to adults.

"I remembered hearing that Leonardo (de Vinci) used numbered background patterns for his stu-

dents and apprentices, and I decided to try something like that," Robbins said.

When Klein asked to see a prototype, Robbins said he "stirred together some Picasso, some Bracque and some Robbins" to create "Abstract No. 1," a vaguely Cubist still life.

"I hate it," Klein told him. "Abstracts are for people who call themselves artists, but can't paint without a damn."

But Klein liked the paint-by-numbers concept and gave Robbins the green light, as long as he could create subjects people "would actually like to paint."

That meant traditional landscapes, dancers and animals — particularly horses, dogs and cats.

"I did the first 30 or 35 subjects myself, then I started farming them out to other artists," Robbins said.

The Craft Master paint-by-numbers kit was born. In the early days, each \$2.50 kit contained three pieces of real canvas, printed with lines and numbers, two brushes, a palette and 20 or so capsules of paint.

Robbins said the first kits used gelatin capsules from a pharmaceutical house to hold the paint, which was pumped into them with an automatic device Klein rigged up from an old grease gun.

Sales were poor at first, but Klein put his faith in an innovative pitch at a 1950 toy show in New York, a single consignment shipment to Macy's and some creative word-of-mouth.

Craft Master's paint-by-numbers sales peaked at 20 million kits in 1955, and its imitators sold even more. The competition's use of cheaper printed cardboard forced Craft Master to phase out canvases, but the market already was showing signs of saturation.

The fall was just as steep as the rise, Robbins said. By 1957, Craft Master's sales had fallen to 1.5 million, and Klein was forced to sell out.

In retirement, Robbins has found a second career as an expert on his own creation. And just to bring things full circle, he recently finished a painting titled "Abstract No. 2."

Lovin', touchin', squeezin'

The affectionate Democratic ticket

BY LIZ SIDOTI
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Bear hugs. Pats on the shoulder. Squeezes.

John Kerry and John Edwards are all over each other.

The two Democrats and one-time rivals have shared so much public affection since becoming a team Tuesday that the presidential candidate even joked about it Friday in New York after Edwards introduced him at fund-raisers and rallies — and hugged him before turning over the podium.

Kerry grinned and shook his head. "There's been a lot of hugging this week," the Massachusetts senator remarked with a chuckle.

Later, Kerry mentioned that Jay Leno had teased the Democratic ticket for being so touchy-feely. Mocking the apparent chemistry between the candidates, "The Tonight Show" strung together clips of the two in their first three days as running mates with Joe Cocker's weepy 1974 hit single "You Are So Beautiful" played in the background.

"We make a great couple, ladies and gentlemen," Kerry joked as New York donors cracked up.

Hugging, kissing and squeezing has become a part of every event since Kerry and Edwards set out on the campaign trail with their wives, Teresa Heinz Kerry and Elizabeth Edwards, for the first time together Wednesday.

It doesn't matter if Kerry is introducing Edwards, or vice versa, the scene is always the same, the loveliest playing out at rallies in Ohio, Florida, West Virginia, New Mexico and New York.

With a toothy smile, the North Carolina senator opens his arms wide and wraps an equally sunny Kerry in a bear hug. The two clap each other sometimes once, often twice, on the back with both hands. Pulling apart, they each drape an arm around each other.

Kerry waves with his free hand, and Edwards



Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., touches his newly selected running mate, Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., during a rally in Dayton, Ohio, on Wednesday. Such open displays of affection are frequent during their appearances.

pumps his fist in the air, thumb up. Sometimes the two tilt their heads together to make inaudible comments.

Often described as aloof, wooden and emotionally detached, Kerry now appears much more relaxed and affectionate, his style more closely resembling his younger Senate colleague.

Foes in the Democratic primary season, Kerry and Edwards were joined at the hip as they strode across the lawn of Kerry's wife's sprawling estate in Pennsylvania on Wednesday, making their first public appearance as running mates. Holding hands with their respective wives, the two walked side by side, grinning, laughing and leaning into one another to talk.

Stars and Stripes

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★ PFC Justin, I love you so much and I'm so proud of you for everything. I can't wait until you're home so I can hug you and never let go. I miss you and can't wait to hear your voice. 5 years strong can't be wrong, honey. Mom says hi, she loves you, and she's praying for you and everyone over there.
Love, Cat

★ Hello! I just want to say that you all have tons of people back here who are praying for you! Also I want to say thank you for everything you are all doing! Hi

★ Uncle Roland! I love you! With love and thanks to everyone, Summer Winberg. P.S. I hope you all have something to smile about today!:)

★ You don't know me and I don't know you but, I have to write to tell you how much I appreciate what you doing for us. I'm a single mom with two boys ages, 10 and 12 years old. When I think about their future it scares me. I wonder what the world will be like for them. My younger sons tell me not to worry because when it gets older he will protect us just like the old soldiers are protecting us now. Just remember, you are doing a great thing and we thank you for who you are and for what you believe in. Remember God takes of those that have faith and believe in Him. God Bless you and your families and I'm praying for you all. God Bless America!!!!!!

★ Hello, I just want you to know I pray everyday for all who are involved in this war and pray that a speedy end may come soon. May God bless and keep you all safe. Marie

Elements come to aid of Ariz. firefighters

BY AMANDA LEE MYERS

The Associated Press

SAFFORD, Ariz. — Light rain and high humidity continued to aid firefighters battling a pair of wildfires that were threatening a multimillion-dollar observatory and nearly 100 summer homes in southeastern Arizona.

Rain fell Thursday and Friday, with meteorologists predicting more precipitation through the weekend and into next week.

The fires, which were 45 percent contained by Friday night,

have charred 27,630 acres on Mount Graham since lightning sparked them in late June.

Fire managers said Friday they were optimistic about saving the 74 cabins in Turkey Flat.

"It seems like we're going to be dodging that bullet," said Dean McAlister, fire management officer for the Coronado National Forest.

High temperatures and low humidity had been driving the wildfires in Turkey Flat, Mount Graham International Observatory, Turkey Flat and Columbine, a community of about 15 cabins.



The Nuttall Complex fire burns Friday atop Mount Graham in Safford, Ariz. In addition to being home to the Mount Graham Observatory and numerous families, the mountain is sacred to some American Indians.

Paul Summerfelt, incident commander for the firefighting team,

said the showers have helped reduce the risk to the observatory, home to some of the world's most advanced telescopes.

"We're not out of this, but the threat has significantly reduced," said observatory Director Buddy

Powell. "For a while, it was difficult to concentrate on anything but the fire. But I'm feeling much better now."

Safford resident Judy Rhoads, whose Turkey Flat cabin has been in the family for 60 years, said the weather was a miracle.

"This is the first time we've had any inkling of optimism from firefighters, and that is really a relief," Rhoads said Friday.

Gov. Janet Napolitano flew over the fire-damaged area Friday and then attended a community meeting in Safford.

"As we go out in these forests, they are tinder, tinder dry," Napolitano said. "All of us need to be cognizant of that fact that there's a lot of forest left and we'd like to leave it that way."

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Marshals: Man uses charm, quick-change to scam car dealers

BY TARA GODVIN

The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — A man alleged to have more than three dozen identities, an affable charm and a drove of disguises is wanted in a scam that has left a trail of bad checks and used cars across the Midwest.

Dozens of car dealers from Kentucky to Kansas have discovered in the last two years that one seller, who seemed like such a nice guy, apparently was a skilled swindler.

Edward Raifsnider, 45, of Joplin, Mo., is suspected of writing

false checks totaling about \$2 million to buy used vehicles from their owners and collecting cash when selling the cars and trucks to dealerships.

Key to his success: The use of approximately 37 false identities and 17 false Social Security numbers, said Supervisor Deputy U.S. Marshal John Spray, with the U.S. Marshals office in Springfield, Mo.

"The man is just, I mean, he's one of the best. He can become somebody in five minutes if he needs to," said Spray, whose office is leading the investigation into Raifsnider for the U.S. Marshals Service.

Raifsnider appears to have a fake U.S. Marshal badge, which he has used to pose as a marshal, Spray said.

Raifsnider also has portrayed himself as an FBI agent, a Secret Service agent and has a penchant for cowboy attire, said Detective Brady Stuart with the Joplin Police Department.

Since he first began investigating a fraud case against Raifsnider in 2001, Stuart has been collect-

ing information in as many as 15 states on cases he believes to be linked to Raifsnider.

The police detective seems to also have been incorporated into Raifsnider's repertoire of identities. Raifsnider is suspected of using the name Bradley Stewart to fraudulently buy vehicles in Chicago, Stuart said.

Raifsnider's scheme tends to go down just about the same way each time, authorities say. An expensive vehicle is paid for with a phony cashier's check on a Friday and sold several states away on a Saturday.

With offices closed for the weekend, it's impossible to verify whether the check is real and it's too soon for the vehicle to be reported stolen.

Raifsnider's criminal record appears to start with a bogus check passed in Oklahoma in 1982, for which he was sentenced to five years in state prison, Spray said Friday. During his most recent arrest for a concealed weapon found in his car in Missouri in January 2003, Raifsnider was using an alias, Spray said.

His true identity wasn't known until a fingerprint analysis came back, and by then he had posted bail, he said.

Dakota County in Nebraska issued an arrest warrant for Raifsnider in May, accusing him of theft by deception in a separate case.

Raifsnider frequently changes his facial hair, sometimes donning a toupee to disguise his balding pate and can drop and gain pounds with enviable ease, Spray said.

"He's pretty good at losing weight and gaining the weight back. So, I don't know what he's doing, but I wish he could help me with my weight loss program," Spray joked.

Raifsnider doesn't seem likely to stop, Spray said.

"I think I would just take the money and disappear forever," Spray said. "But he just keeps at it."



Raifsnider

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Cars could steal show in Johnny Cash film

BY JOHN BEIFUSS
The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Hall Prewitt's beauties will get plenty of screen time in "Walk the Line," the movie biography of Johnny Cash shooting in Memphis.

When the film is released next year, Prewitt's head-turners are sure to earn admiring oohs and aaahs from viewers who appreciate sleek curves and a classy chassis. Prewitt, 47, is the "picture car coordinator" for "Walk the Line."

Among the high-performance performers he's recruited for the film are a 1955 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz convertible for the film's Sam Phillips character; a "black-on-black-on-black" Cadillac convertible for Joaquin Phoenix as Cash; and an Oldsmobile "Rocket 88," the car immortalized by Jackie Brenston and Ike Turner in their classic 1951 Sun recording.

Overall, the affable Prewitt will provide the "Walk the Line" filmmakers with more than 200 vintage sedans, convertibles, taxis, squad cars, tour buses, pickup trucks, moving vans, military vehicles and even private aircraft — including a 1945 Conair — before the Memphis-based phase of the production ends in September.

Said Prewitt of his stable of motorized stars: "I don't care what's under the hood, but they have to look authentic."

"He's the only game in town with his experience and his access to period vehicles," Memphis & Shelby County Film Commissioner Linn Stiller said of Prewitt. "In the South, there's a cultural love of old cars," she said.

"Loving your car, loving your '54 Chevy — it's just kind of goes with the South. So the pool of period cars here is amazing."

Over the past 15 years, Prewitt has compiled a directory of more than 700 antique automobiles and their owners.

Last week, he assembled about 40 De-



THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL/AP

Hall Prewitt radios for the keys to a 1953 Plymouth parked on South Main Street in Memphis, Tenn., during the filming of "Walk the Line" on July 1. Overall, Prewitt will provide the "Walk the Line" filmmakers with more than 200 vintage vehicles before the Memphis-based phase of the production ends in September.

troit classics for a few days of shooting along a stretch of South Main that had been transformed through repainted facades and vintage signage into a representation of the 700 block of Union Avenue circa 1955, when Cash cut his first sides for Sam Phillips's Sun Records label.

As a Cash-costumed Phoenix walked along the sidewalk in take after take for director James Mangold, Prewitt's four-wheeled "extras" cruised by, to lend the shots some 1950s flavor and to complement the human extras in vintage clothing who strolled through the scene.

Some of the cars had been modified by the pro department, their 2004 license tags replaced with rhomboid cardboard

cutouts modeled after the old Tennessee-shaped license plates of the era.

When a engine roared down the street, forcing a temporary halt to the production, Prewitt shouted: "Just don't hit the cars!" He gets anxious when he sees crew people lugging potentially paint-scratching cameras and lights near his babies.

"It always makes me nervous when they stand so close to the cars."

Cordell Walker, 53, got to drive his own 1955 Chevy sedan down Main Street for "Walk the Line."

"Johnny Cash is a legend, and I think this has the potential to be a great film and a real blockbuster, so it's great to be part of

it," said Walker, executive director of Alpha Omega Veterans Services as well as a classic car fan.

Walker said he met Prewitt five years ago at a car show, but this is the first time one of his vehicles has been featured in a movie. "I was excited he finally called me."

"Walk the Line" pays the car owners \$150 a day for the use of their vehicles.

Prewitt said area car owners "know I'm from Memphis, so they know they can trust me. They know I'll take care of them."

Prewitt himself was never a car crazy. "I don't own a single antique car," he said. "and don't ask me to change the oil."

He got into the "picture car" business almost by accident. ("Picture car" is a movie term that refers to any vehicle that is needed on camera during the shooting of a film.)

Prewitt was a film student at the University of Memphis when he volunteered to work as an art director for "The Old Forest," professor Steven J. Ross's 1985 short film adaptation of the Peter Taylor short story.

Prewitt was in charge of digging up vintage props, including an old Victrola. He also found some antique cars.

A couple of years later, he headed down to Oxford, Miss., hoping to get an art department job on the set of "Heart of Dixie" with Ally Sheedy and Treat Williams. When the producers learned he had supplied vintage cars for "The Old Forest," they asked him to do the same for "Dixie."

Since "Dixie," Prewitt has been a picture car coordinator on "My Dog Skip," "A Painted House," the Chuck Norris action flick "Delta Force 2" (shot in Johnson City and numerous TV commercials and music videos).

Of course, he can't fulfill every request. Every year, he said, someone with an Elvis project "wants a pink Cadillac, but there just aren't any around. Even Elvis's was a special paint job."



EAST VALLEY TRIBUNE/AP

Glen Campbell, center, who is currently serving a 10-day sentence for an aggravated DUI charge, performs for about 1,000 inmates inside Maricopa County Sheriff's Tent City Jail on Friday in Phoenix. Maricopa County Sheriff officer Kelly Wilson, top, keeps an eye on inmates. Accompanying Campbell is band member Ken Skaggs on the guitar.

Inmate Glen Campbell performs prison concert

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Glen Campbell, nearing the end of his 10-day sentence for extreme drunken driving, gave a free 30-minute concert Friday night for about 1,000 inmates at Maricopa County's outdoor jail.

"Tent City, you're gentle on my mind," Campbell sang during his

opening song, the million-selling "Gentle on My Mind." He performed several of his Top-10 hits.

Campbell, 68, was arrested in November near his posh Phoenix home after causing a minor traffic accident.

He pleaded guilty in May to extreme DUI and leaving the scene of an accident.

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we support our troops

Post-office scare

VT BENNINGTON — Federal authorities are considering criminal charges stemming from a hazardous materials scare at the town's post office last week.

The office was shut down for a few hours after employees found white powder leaking from an envelope. The substance turned out to be Vicodin, a prescription painkiller.

The envelope was sent to a Bennington resident and postmarked from Scottsdale, Ariz., said James Adams, a district manager for the U.S. Postal Service in New Hampshire.

Adams said that the envelope was mailed from an individual, not a business or hospital.

Any crime related to the incident would be prosecuted federally by U.S. postal inspectors and the U.S. Department of Justice, he said. While the incident is under investigation, Adams said he was confident that it would be resolved relatively soon.

Immigrants nabbed

TX SWEETWATER — More than two dozen illegal immigrants from Brazil and Mexico — many sick from the heat and in need of food and water — have been detained after police received a tip that people were jumping from the back of a tractor-trailer rig at a truck stop.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency said the immigrants had been in the back of the rig for at least a day. All were examined by emergency medical personnel, but none required treatment.

Of the 29 taken into custody on Wednesday, 25 were from Brazil and four were from Mexico. Four of the immigrants were women.

Authorities searched for several hours for five immigrants who ran from police.

3rd time's the charm?

CT NEW HAVEN — Bill Curry, a twice-defeated Democratic candidate for governor, says he's considering running for a third time. Curry, 52, says he'll decide in the fall after he completes a book on ethics. Curry, a former state controller, lost twice to John G. Rowland, the Republican governor who resigned last week amid an impeachment investigation and federal corruption investigation.

School bus pollution

NH NASHUA — The Environmental Protection Agency is giving New Hampshire a \$100,000 grant to help reduce school bus pollution. At least 45 school buses in Manchester and Nashua will be upgraded with filters and other equipment that will cut diesel fumes by 30 percent. Pollution from diesel engines can worsen conditions such as asthma.

King statue planned

GA AUGUSTA — Augusta sculptor John Savage was contracted to design and build a life-size bronze statue of Martin Luther King Jr. It's expected to cost about \$45,000. Planners hope to unveil the statue at next year's commemoration of the civil rights



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

leader's birthday on Jan. 15. Some want the statue to be on Broad Street, which runs through the city's downtown.

Arsenal survival

IL ROCK ISLAND — The Rock Island Arsenal escaped the last round of base closings, but area development officials want to keep it in business. The Quad-City Development Group and the state have hired two Washington-based lobbying firms to promote the arsenal's manufacturing center and logistical commands. About 6,000 people work at the arsenal, making weapons systems and armored door kits used on Army Humvees.

Earthquake recovery

CA PASO ROBLES — Most of the 42 businesses displaced from downtown buildings damaged in December's big earthquake have reopened, officials said. They're predicting dramatic improvements in the area by next year. "We just had a glowing economic forecast," Mayor Frank Meschman said. The magnitude-6.5 quake killed two women and caused \$239 million in property losses.

Rattlesnake scare

MT LIVINGSTON — Two young tourists on a walk in the Paradise Valley found themselves on a hillside infested with rattlesnakes, and used a cellular

phone to tearfully ask for help.

Izzy Effler, 13, and Morgan Beadwell, 12, climbed the hill Tuesday to see if they could make cell-phone contact with friends back home in Colorado.

"We were just going up for a hike and my dog sniffed out a hole," Izzy said. She said a rattlesnake "struck at me" but did not bite. Then Morgan stepped on one, ran away from it and another appeared.

Izzy summoned her friend, and as the girls from Loveland, Colo., stood together, six rattlers moved in around them.

The girls called Brian Effler, Izzy's father. He said that when he got the call, the girls "weren't talking, they were sobbing."

Effler and his teenage nephew ran up the hillside with a pellet gun in hand. They shot two rattlers before reaching the girls, Effler said. After two snakes slithered into holes, the girls saw a clearing and began making their way down the hillside.

Rattlesnake trapper Rusty Juhnke, who was called to help, said he saw 25 to 30 snakes in the area where the girls had been waiting.

This is a dangerous time of year to hike in rattlesnake country because it is the snakes' shedding season, and they may be more aggressive than usual, Juhnke said. He advised carrying a long stick on hikes.

"This way the snakes will go for the stick and not your foot or leg," he said.

Return of the gray wolf

NM ALBUQUERQUE — A judge has rebuffed an effort by ranching groups to shut down the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction program, saying the animals' survival is more important than minor economic losses.

U.S. District Judge M. Christina Armijo rejected a preliminary injunction of the program despite ranchers' allegations that wolves have attacked cattle and could breed with dogs to create a hybrid species.

"In this case," Armijo wrote in her order Tuesday, "the balance of hardships and the public interest weigh in favor of allowing the reintroduction and translocation efforts."

Spider attack at store

NH LACONIA — A 20-year-old grocery clerk is recovering after apparently being bitten by a black widow spider hidden in a bunch of grapes.

Vista Foods clerk Garrett Cota-Robles was bitten on Wednesday and was hospitalized at Lakes Region General Hospital.

Cota-Robles' mother, Gretchen Preston, says doctors expect her son to make a full recovery, although he was in considerable pain.

Jim Prive, vice president and general manager of Associated Grocers of New England, confirmed a store employee had been bitten by a spider.

He said it was unclear whether the spider was a black widow but Laconia Fire Chief Ken Erickson, who said he saw it, believes it was. Erickson said he and other firefighters happened to be at the hospital when the victim was brought in.



Unidentified outfits

Sisters Emily, 8, left, and Bethanie Schmitt, 6, make their way to the stage for the Alien Costume Contest at the International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, N.M.



Rollin' on the river

The Pittsburgh Institute of Technology entry in the Flouts Race, a giant egg carton, makes its way down the Allegheny River to the confluence of the Ohio River during the Pittsburgh Three Rivers Regatta.



Pedaling home

Kate Rowan, 29, of Charlestown, Mass., rides the bicycle she plans to use to commute to work during the Democratic National Convention.



Bikers 'n' Brando

Streake, left, and Radar Ashley, of Grass Valley, Calif., stand in front of a larger-than-life wooden likeness of actor Marlon Brando in front of Johnny's Bar and Grill in Hollister, Calif.



Open wide
in Greeley, Colo.

Ryan Schaefer of Loveland, Colo., opens wide to gulp down a bowl of beans during the annual Bush's Baked Beans eating contest at the Rocky Mountain Stampede



Smooth descent

Bruce Martin, 16, of Port Republic, Va., guides his powered parachute to a grass landing strip along Port Republic Road east of Harrisonburg, Va., as a cumulonimbus thunderstorm cloud looms in the distance.



High flyer

A member of the Project Bandaloo team rappels from the face of the new 27-story Rendezvous tower at Resort Atlantic City Hotel Casino in Atlantic City, N.J.

New law stymies charity

TX DALLAS — A Muscular Dystrophy Association fund-raising campaign came up short this year, but it wasn't because the economy is still slow to rebound.

Firefighters were restricted from soliciting for money on or near public streets by a new city panhandling ordinance and couldn't meet Dallas Fire-Rescue's \$350,000 goal for the Fill the Boot campaign.

The Dallas Firefighters Association president, Mike Buehler, said "the grand total was \$60,000, about \$300,000 less than what we had last year."

Firefighters had asked the City Council to make an exemption to the panhandling ordinance that began shortly after last year's campaign. But Council members upheld the ordinance and declined to provide an exemption to avoid discriminating against anyone.

Saved from a swim

FL ST. PETERSBURG — Stranger than a fish out of water: a kitten in the bay.

When Maggie Rogers spotted something bobbing in the water three miles into the Gulf of Mexico while on a scalloping trip with friends, she assumed it was a turtle or a piece of sea kelp.

But as the boat got closer and slowed down, she discovered it was a tiny, apricot-colored kitten. Nine inches long and screeching, the cat was paddling furiously.

"We scooped him up and he sat on the boat with me for eight hours," said Rogers, who is the finance director at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

The boaters on the 17-foot Scout Current Drift did not know how the kitten arrived in the Homosassa Bay. There were at least 40 boats in the crowded area where he was found, they said.

Juror judged

MO KANSAS CITY — Barbara Sparkman's attempt to duck jury duty nearly landed her in jail.

Sparkman, 54, was serving as an alternate juror in a murder trial when she left a message Thursday morning with court officials, saying she was too stressed to continue.

Circuit Judge Thomas Clark wasn't pleased and ordered deputies to find Sparkman and bring her to court to explain herself.

Sparkman told Clark and her co-jurors that she didn't want to view crime scene and autopsy photos, that she had an asthma attack Wednesday night and that she was worried about her mother in a nursing home.

Clark then told the jury to pick Sparkman's fate: one day in jail, a return trip to the jury pool next week or a sentence of sitting somewhere in the courthouse for the rest of the trial.

Jurors decided against jail, but chose the other two penalties.

Fizzy fruit for kids

OR PORTLAND — Your kids want soda pop, but you want them to have fruit.

Some Oregon State University researchers are working on a com-

promise that will keep everyone happy: fizzy fruit.

The researchers are working on carbonated apples, pears and other juicy treats.

Texas neurobiologist Galen Kaufman discovered fizzy fruit by accident. He was on a sailing trip and bit into a pear that had been chilled with dry ice. The fruit had absorbed the CO₂ and had a fizzy like soda pop.

Now Kaufman is working with OSU professor John Henry Wells. They hope to find a way to carbonate fruit on a commercial scale. The researchers say fizzy fruit should be a big hit with kids and their parents.

Strikingly slow commute

MA WORCESTER — Striking transit workers and the management firm that runs Worcester's bus system may not return to negotiations for long in two weeks, a union official said. The stalled talks present a major inconvenience to the system's regular passengers. They face limited alternatives to the 28 bus routes serving Worcester and 13 surrounding communities.

Florida felon voters

FL TALLAHASSEE — The Florida Division of Elections has done an about-face and decided it will allow voting by almost 2,500 former felons whose restored voting rights had been threatened with revocation.

The agency initially said state law required that former felons be deleted from the voter rolls because they had registered to vote before they were granted clemency. Florida is one of seven states that do not automatically restore felons' civil rights after they finish their prison sentences.

Secretary of State Glenda Hood backtracked on the issue Wednesday.

"It goes without saying that our guiding principle throughout this process will be to err on the side of the voter," Hood said in a statement.

Scenic commute

NJ TRENTON — The state Department of Transportation is planning 40 acres of wildflowers along several major highways.

NJDOT Commissioner Jack Lettiere said the plantings not only give motorists a more pleasant view but also save maintenance dollars by reducing the amount of grass mowing. Total cost is about \$6,000, including equipment for planting.

Seeking Medicare pay

AL BIRMINGHAM — Nearly 100 hospitals from Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi have filed suit against the federal government. They're seeking more than \$261 million in Medicare payments they claim they were denied because of an incorrect payment formula for labor costs. The Alabama Hospital Association said the practice has been going on for years, though the suit only covers fiscal 2003 and 2004. An official with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said the agency doesn't discuss pending lawsuits.

From The Associated Press

IN THE WORLD

Afghan presidential vote scheduled for October 9

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Saturday welcomed the announcement of an Oct. 9 polling date for the country's first direct presidential elections, which were hailed by the United States as a "critical step" toward democracy.

However, a parliamentary vote meant to be held simultaneously has been put off until next year amid attacks by Taliban-led insurgents and slow progress in disarming warlords who could manipulate the process.

The elections, originally scheduled for June, are seen as a referendum on the rebuilding of this war-ravaged nation and a test of the ability of Afghan and international forces to keep the peace.

Zakim Shah, head of the joint Afghan-U.N. electoral commission, said on state television Friday that the commission "decided

to hold the presidential election on Mizan 18" — a date on Afghanistan's calendar that corresponds to Oct. 9.

He said the parliamentary vote likely would be held in April or May, and he appealed to Afghan authorities and the international community to create a more secure atmosphere for the candidates and the voters."

Karzai, who was eager to hold both elections this year, respected the commission's decision, spokesman Jawed Ludin said.

"The president welcomes the announcement and is pleased at the prospect that the people of Afghanistan will be able to vote in

Mizan as promised," Ludin said.

In Washington, a White House spokesman said President Bush welcomes the decision to schedule the elections, which "will mark a critical step forward in Afghanistan's transition to democracy."

"The decision is a sign that the Afghan people will not allow the Taliban and other terrorist elements to stand in the way of their democratic future," the spokesman said.

U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the United States — which leads a 20,000-strong coalition hunting al-Qaida and Taliban rebels in Afghanistan — was providing funds, expertise and security for the polls.

Karzai, who took over as transitional leader after the 2001 ouster of the Taliban by U.S.-led forces, is expected to win the presidential vote against at least a half-dozen rivals in this ethnically and regionally fractured country.



Karzai



The golden shrine of the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem's Old city can be seen Friday behind a wall being built in the village of Abu Dis in the outskirts of Jerusalem.

Palestinians seek EU support against West Bank barrier

BY SUSAN SEVAREID
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — As Israel enlisted American support, the Palestinians sought European backing Saturday for U.N. enforcement of a nonbinding international ruling that found Israel's massive West Bank barrier to be illegal.

In the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, residents said Israel tightened a security crackdown now in its 12th day, leaving them short of water, milk and other essentials. The operation, aimed at stopping rocket attacks, began after a June 28 strike in the Israeli town Sderot killed two people, including a 3-year-old.

Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, speaking to Israel radio, said he has asked U.S. officials to prevent the adoption of any U.N. resolution aimed at enforcing the court's decision.

The Palestinians have said they will seek the support of the world body's members in the General Assembly, then go to the Security Council.

"The issue will go to the Security Council because the [Palestinians] have an automatic majority in the U.N. General Assembly," Shalom said.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia told European envoy Marc Ote that the Palestinians want Europe's support at the United Nations.

Qureia told Ote he hoped the Americans would not "sabotage our efforts," according to participants in the meeting. Washington has veto power in the Security Council and has been blocked proposed resolutions it found to be not in Israel's interests.

"Now, it is the responsibility of the international community, it is the responsibility of the U.N., to put (in place) a mechanism to commit Israel to this decision," Qureia told reporters after the meeting.

Ote, standing by his side, was noncommittal, though he noted past EU objections to the barrier.

"We have to look carefully at what the court says and what the consequences are," Ote said. As to the General Assembly, "we have to see how things happen."

Several European countries had supported the Israeli and U.S. position that the world court should not interfere on the barrier because the issue was political, not legal, and could disrupt Middle East peace efforts. The court, however, rejected that argument, saying it had jurisdiction to give an advisory opinion.

Washington said its position hasn't changed.

"It remains our view that this referral to the court was inappropriate and that, in fact, it could impede efforts to achieve progress toward a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Washington, he said, also rejects the idea there should be "further action" by the United Nations in light of the court ruling.

In its advisory ruling Friday, the U.N.'s International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, declared the barrier illegal and said construction must stop. It urged the General Assembly and Security Council to consider "what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation."

'First steps of change' in Egypt Cabinet resigns; president appoints new prime minister

BY MAGGIE MICHAEL
The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — The resignation of Egypt's government was lauded by newspapers Saturday as "the first steps of change," reflecting wide disenchantment with the administration that had been criticized for failing to bring about sorely needed economic, political and social reforms.

Following the Cabinet's resignation on Friday, President Hosni Mubarak appointed a new prime minister, Ahmed Nazief, and gave him a deadline of Saturday to form a fresh Cabinet.

On Saturday, the state-run Middle East News Agency said that Nazief appointed a new foreign minister, choosing Egypt's ambassador to the United Nations since 1999, Ahmed About Chet, 62, to replace Ahmed Maher, Egypt's envoy for the past three years.

About Chet, an Egyptian diplomat since 1965, is expected to arrive in Egypt on Sunday.

Friday's Cabinet resignation, which had been long expected, and the appointment of virtually unknown former state information and communications minister to new prime minister further consolidates Mubarak's power at a time of growing calls for sweeping change in the Arab world's most populous state.

"Finally what we want has happened and the first steps of change have begun," Samir Ragab, editor-in-chief of Al-Gomhuria newspaper wrote in an editorial.

The resignations of Obaid and his 32 ministers were long expected. The reshuffle follows a much-publicized reform movement headed by Mubarak and his

Egyptian Prime Minister Nazief

Name — Ahmed Nazief
Age — 52
Residence — Cairo



Nazief

Party — the ruling National Democratic Party

Education — Graduated with a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Cairo University in 1973. Graduated with Ph.D. from McGill University in Canada 1983

Political History — Served as executive manager of Egypt's council of ministers' information center, joins cabinet as information and communications minister

ter in 1999; holds post until July 11 when Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak appoints him prime minister

Religion — Islam
Family — Wife and two sons

— The Associated Press

41-year-old son, Gamal, who has drawn attention since his father appointed him head of the ruling party's policy-making committee in 2002.

The president named the 52-year-old Nazief, a former information and communications minister, to run Egypt's day-to-day activities, replacing the 72-year-old Obaid, who was prime minister for four years.

Balkans heat kills two

SKOPJE, Macedonia — A heat wave that hit the Balkans this week killed two people in Romania and caused an increase in emergency hospital calls, prompting doctors' warnings Friday for people to stay indoors.

Two people suffered fatal heart attacks caused by the heat and

died in the Transylvanian city of Deva on Thursday, the ambulance service said.

Romania's Transportation Ministry on Friday banned heavy trucks from traveling between noon and 6 p.m. due to high temperatures, which climbed to about 100 degrees Fahrenheit on Friday, the private Mediafax news agency reported.

Doctors in Serbia-Montenegro and Macedonia urged people to drink a lot of liquid as temperatures soared to over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in Podgorica, the capital of this Montenegro, emergency doctor Igor Jovanovic said his service had received a number of calls from people who have either collapsed from heat or suffered sunburns.

From The Associated Press



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelux: Mostly cloudy with rain showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the lower 50s.

Britain, Ireland: Cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the lower to mid 60s and lows in the upper 40s to mid 50s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Mostly cloudy with rain showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70s with lower 90s further inland. Lows in the mid 50s to mid 60s.

France: Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower to mid 60s inland and mid 70s along the southeastern coast. Lows in the mid 50s to mid 60s.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the lower to mid 60s and lows in the lower 50s.

Southern Germany: Mostly cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the upper 50s to lower 60s and lows in the upper 40s to lower 50s.

Hungary: Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 70s and lows in the mid 50s.

Northern Italy: Mostly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the mid 70s to mid 80s and lows in the upper 50s to upper 60s.

Southern Italy: Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 80s to lower 90s and lows in the lower 70s.

Kosovo: Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 90s and lows in the upper 60s.

Norway: Cloudy with light rain showers. Highs in the mid to upper 60s and lows in the lower to mid 50s.

Portugal, Spain: Sunny. Highs in the upper 70s to upper 80s and lows in the upper 50s to upper 60s.

Turkey: Sunny. Highs in the upper 80s to upper 90s and lows in the lower to mid 70s with upper 50s further inland.

AFRICA

Cape Town	HI 68	LO 45	Mogadishu	HI 74	LO 51
Durban	HI 84	LO 77	Nairobi	HI 74	LO 53
Freetown	HI 80	LO 65	Rabat	HI 81	LO 58
Khartoum	HI 85	LO 65	Tripoli	HI 82	LO 65

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	HI 80	LO 64	Manila	HI 80	LO 75
Bahran	HI 84	LO 70	Montreal	HI 78	LO 68
Beijing	HI 82	LO 63	Riyadh	HI 82	LO 68
Bombay	HI 85	LO 65	Sydney	HI 81	LO 72
Caracas	HI 85	LO 65	Tokyo	HI 82	LO 65
Hong Kong	HI 85	LO 65			
London	HI 82	LO 63			

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Arlene, Tex.	HI 74	LO 62	Cleveland	HI 82	LO 62
Atlanta, Ga.	HI 84	LO 64	Colorado Springs	HI 82	LO 62
Baltimore	HI 84	LO 64	Columbia, S.C.	HI 82	LO 62
Albuquerque	HI 84	LO 64	Columbus, Ga.	HI 82	LO 62
Albany, N.Y.	HI 84	LO 64	Concord, N.H.	HI 82	LO 62
Anchorage	HI 84	LO 64	Cornwall, Conn.	HI 82	LO 62
Asheville	HI 84	LO 64	Dallas-Ft. Worth	HI 82	LO 62
Atlanta	HI 84	LO 64	Daytona Beach	HI 82	LO 62
Baton Rouge	HI 84	LO 64	Denver	HI 82	LO 62
Birmingham	HI 84	LO 64	Des Moines	HI 82	LO 62
Boston	HI 84	LO 64	Detroit	HI 82	LO 62
Boulder	HI 84	LO 64	Dubuque	HI 82	LO 62
Butte	HI 84	LO 64	El Paso	HI 82	LO 62
Cambridge, Mass.	HI 84	LO 64	El Paso	HI 82	LO 62
Charleston, S.C.	HI 84	LO 64	El Paso	HI 82	LO 62
Chicago	HI 84	LO 64	El Paso	HI 82	LO 62
Cincinnati	HI 84	LO 64	El Paso	HI 82	LO 62



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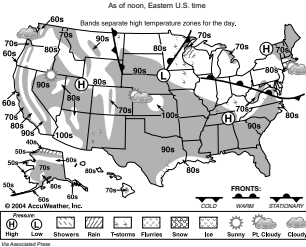
Mazhar-Sharif	HI 118	LO 88
Ashgabat	HI 77	LO 63
Kabul	HI 94	LO 67
Islamabad	HI 97	LO 78
New Delhi	HI 96	LO 82
Kandahar	HI 103	LO 78
Hyderabad	HI 87	LO 73
Bombay	HI 86	LO 80

For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAF Operational Weather Squadron home page at <https://www.smbach.af.mil>

SUN & MOON

Sunrise (London)	Today 0449	Tomorrow 0450
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	Today 0529	Tomorrow 0530
Sunset (London)	Today 2117	Tomorrow 2118
Sunset (Frankfurt)	Today 2133	Tomorrow 2132

THE UNITED STATES TODAY



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STARS & STRIPES

STARS AND STRIPES

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World's best team

In my opinion, I am a member of the best team in the world.

In my team, no one is a superstar. We are just a bunch of unknown players, but we function great as a team.

We don't have salary caps and we can't get traded to a different team, even if we ask.

My team is unique and, as far as I know, we are undefeated over three decades. And with this kind of record, my team makes never make it into the newspapers, but if the Los Angeles Lakers win 10 games in four weeks they will be all over the newspapers across America. I don't think members of my team have ever signed an autograph, but I know they are the most underrated and underpaid in America.

My team spends more time together than any other team. We may play on the road for a ridiculous amount of time (14 months), but I have never heard my team mates complaining or saying they wish they could play for a team closer to home.

Members of my team have never slept in luxurious hotels or driven expensive cars and they don't even know what New York City, Las Vegas or California look like. But they play the game with courage, passion and heart.

I can say that I am the team captain, but it doesn't really matter because I am just a team player, and I like to work as hard as they work.

Players in America will panic if a person throws a candy wrapper, popcorn or peanuts at them. They would stop the game.

My players play constantly under pressure, as grenades, rockets, improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and God knows what else are thrown at them. But my players don't even flinch; they are focused to win the game.

My players fight for freedom and liberty, to make sure that whenever anyone enjoys the freedom, liberty and fortune that we don't give them. I love my team and I will give my life in their defense.

What team in America works 365 days, 24 hours a day, seven days a week? No team in the world.

Tell us what you think

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And my team mates will make anywhere home. They will sleep on the floor, in mud or sand, and still never complain. I am proud of my team, and even though I know I will be totally unknown for the rest of my career, I will never play for another team.

My team is 2nd Platoon Company C, 16th Engineer Battalion, First Armored Division.

Do you think my team deserves 30 days of leave free of charge after spending more than a year in Iraq? Hell yeah!

Staff Sgt. Alberto Reyes
 Camp Victory North, Iraq

Angry at military, media

The savage murder of American contractor Paul Johnson Jr. came as a shock to most civilized people.

Though according to the "Rush Limbaugh Show" on the EIT Radio Network, it appears that people are almost getting used to hearing such news. Society seems to be desensitized by such news. The shock of his savage murder isn't as strong as the shock of the savage murder of Nicholas Berg.

The news has left me outraged. But my rage is not as much toward Al-Qaida, which has made it a point to use its warped interpretation of Islam to justify its savage bloodlust and cruelty. My anger is, to a

lessor extent, generated toward those few military personnel who not only resorted to torturing and humiliating Iraqi prisoners but, as if to exercise a total lack of common sense, decided to have pictures taken, which could only further anger Al-Qaida, adding more fire to an already volatile situation.

My rage is generated toward the media, which, in an effort to sensationalize the news, painted a picture of alleged widespread prison abuse, making our armed forces in Iraq appear to be little more than a force of barbarians, eager to stoop to the level of the same savages who think nothing of killing innocent people.

Perhaps those same reporters and journalists who are so eager to blow the picture way out of proportion, caring not one iota what added dangers they have created for our armed forces as long as their stories win them a few awards and commendations, should be reminded that they cannot take it with them when they die because it would burn!

Michael McKenna

Sigonella, Italy

Study all sides of issues

I agree with one point (yes, only one) the writer of "AP's poll was hogwash" (July 1) stated.

It is hard to imagine that the opinions of about 1,200 people can be projected to a population of about 275 million. It is even hard to imagine that those opinions could be projected to a much smaller voting population of about 105 million (year 2000 election results).

But the results of the poll is less "dubious" than the polls taken in the year 2002 that declared 70 percent of the people supposedly supported the president's decision to go to war.

However, informed citizens and voters need to listen, read about and research all sides of the issues so that we can decide what is dubious and vote accordingly. I find the writer's own poll and conclusions dubious.

I appreciate the news organizations that present all the information, even if I don't agree with some of it.

Gordon USCier

Würzburg, Germany



by G.B. Trudeau



OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

Ad stance a double standard
The Daytona Beach (Fla.) News-Journal

Citizens United dubs itself "America's premier conservative research organization." Hard to say what "premier" stands for: It blames President Clinton for leaving America vulnerable to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. And it wants Sen. John Kerry to apologize to the military for his outrage at the abuse of Iraqi prisoners.

Also, Citizens United wants the Federal Election Commission to ban all advertising for Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" after July 31, if not the movie itself.

Citizens United argues that ads for the movie amount to anti-Bush political commercials. Therefore, they fit the definition of "independent expenditures" that specifically help one political candidate or another. The McCain-Feingold campaign-finance law bans those expenditures when they're close to an election or a political convention. The Federal Election Commission is actually taking Citizens United's demand seriously.

... The White House, curiously, has decided to be as calculatedly speechless on "Fahrenheit 9/11," hoping — in good Bush administration fashion — that ignoring Moore will make him go away faster. ...

It's hard to think that political discourse can be so easily dumbed down to the terms of a summer movie. Sadder still to think that election laws could be stupidly construed to target one kind of political speech and not another.

Edwards helps with balance
The (Baltimore) Sun

Flirtations with Republican John McCain aside, the selection of North Carolina Sen. John Edwards as John Kerry's running mate seems so natural that one can only wonder why it took months to make the decision. In the Democratic primaries, the 51-year-old Edwards proved a sizzling campaigner. He wasn't a Washington insider, or a multistate general, or even a candidate who necessarily would broaden the party's base. Yet his "two Americas" message excited hard-core Democrats and working-class voters by offering in a way that Kerry hasn't always been able to match.

Energetic and charismatic, Edwards brings a gift for public speaking and a concern to average Americans that helps balance Kerry's more patrician image.

Republicans will no doubt complain that Edwards is just a one-term senator — and has been a lot of times — out from under while running for president. They will mock his ambition, his good looks, and the fact that he's an attorney. But these criticisms seem minor. Edwards mounted a credible campaign for president. As a candidate for vice president, the fact that he's a product of the private sector can be seen as an asset — anything to balance out the professional politician running at the top of the ticket.

Report confirms Tenet's faults
The Times Union, Albany, N.Y.

Just a month ago, when George Tenet unexpectedly resigned as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, some pundits were getting out because he had to — that is, before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence issued a scathing report on the CIA's failure to get it right about Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction. On Tuesday, those pundits were proved right. It's difficult to see how Mr. Tenet could have remained on the job in the wake of what amounts to an indictment of his leadership.

The report is sure to heighten the debate



over President Bush's decision to go to war against Iraq, and might be used to provide some cover for it. ...

It's little wonder that Mr. Tenet refuses to confirm whether he ever told Mr. Bush that the case for Saddam's weapons of mass destruction was a "slam dunk" — a quote attributed to him in a book by Bob Woodward of the Washington Post. Regardless, the committee has performed a slam dunk of its own — on Mr. Tenet's failed leadership.

Examine student conduct
The Times-Picayune, New Orleans

A report tendered to Congress as part of the No Child Left Behind Act ... demands a serious response.

Charol Shakeshaft, a professor at Hofstra University's School of Education, analyzed research on sexual misconduct in schools, looking at nearly 900 documents. That is the first such analysis.

Two large teacher organizations are finding fault with the report, saying that it lumps together harassment with molestation, which makes the problem seem worse than it is.

But alarm over sexual harassment isn't misplaced, and criminal behavior isn't the only thing that's unacceptable in schools. The report's author said she didn't concentrate solely on abuse because sexual harassment can also be extremely damaging to children — and she's right.

The fact that this report doesn't make those distinctions doesn't mean it isn't valid; it does mean that more research is needed. In fact, the report itself points out that there has not been a nationally financed effort to collect data on sexual misconduct in schools.

Leaving nothing in Reserve?
The (Hilton Head, S.C.) Island Packet

When Lindsey Graham speaks about the problems facing members of the National Guard and Reserve troops, the nation should listen.

The South Carolina Republican is the only active reservist in the U.S. Senate.

When he says that the nation is going to wear out its Guard and Reserve people, there needs to be a reaction. When he says "We need more people in the pipeline," it should not fall on deaf ears.

America cannot police the Earth on the backs of reservists, and it should not do it with mercenaries or corporate hires. ...

About 40 percent of the troops in Iraq are Guard and Reserve members. In June, reserve troops accounted for nearly half of all troops killed in combat.

They frequently face repeated call-ups. They are ordered to extend their stays in harm's way. They face orders that stop them from leaving the service. It's no wonder that the percentage of reservists serving long tours overseas who say they will likely quit when their tour ends has recently doubled. ...

The question the nation must answer is whether it is asking too much of too few.

Time to raise minimum wage
Minneapolis Star Tribune

Every six or seven years, Congress takes stock of the American job market and decides that the economy is not performing well for the working poor. The nation has arrived at one of those moments.

Since the current recovery started in 2001, corporate profits have grown by 58 percent, while private-sector earnings have actually fallen by 2 percent. By some measures, income inequality has reached its highest level since World War II. Roughly 17 million American children are growing up at or near the poverty line — even though they live in households with a full-time working parent. This is not a healthy condition for capitalism or a good way to raise the nation's next generation.

A fast, powerful way to improve those statistics would be for Congress to raise the federal minimum wage, which has not budged since 1997. Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., has proposed to raise it from \$5.15 to \$7 per hour over the next two years. A vote could come soon, and the Senate should give American workers what Kennedy proposes.

China refuses friendly advice
The Washington Post

In the minds of China's leaders, Jiang Yangong, the 72-year-old army surgeon who became a national hero for exposing the Chinese government's cover-up of the SARS epidemic, could now be the single most dangerous individual to the country. Authorities have detained Jiang for more than a month since he wrote a letter to the government denouncing the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Chinese authorities have subjected Jiang to "brainwashing sessions," forcing

him to sit through intensive indoctrination until he "changes his thinking" and "raises his level of understanding," Jiang has refused to capitulate.

Why do Chinese leaders consider Jiang so threatening? His exposure of the government's SARS cover-up instantly gave him an immense national respect that the Chinese government cannot control or take away. ...

China has had some success at discrediting pro-democracy and religious dissidents as counterrevolutionary rebels and zealots, but they will have a hard time damaging Jiang's reputation. For one, Jiang isn't calling for an end to the one-party system or for democracy but rather is arguing that the Communist Party stands to gain more support and legitimacy by disavowing the state-ordered massacre at Tiananmen Square. Second, and especially unfortunate for Beijing, is that Jiang fits the profile of an archetypal Chinese hero — that of a conscientious scholarly official who puts himself on the line to tell the corrupt emperor the truth for the sake of the people and is ordered punished. ...

Jiang's detention ... demonstrates that China's leaders are in no mood to progress toward political liberalization. ... As Jiang wrote to the Chinese leadership, "The claim that stability is of overriding importance can in fact cause even greater instability." China — and the world — should listen.

Making room to see space
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Don't look now, but 2004 is shaping up as one of the most memorable years ever for space exploration.

In February, we had a veritable convention of probes from the United States, Britain and Europe gathering around Mars. The U.S. rovers Spirit and Opportunity, which have been rumbling around Mars since January, are still sending back their mission, beyond the predicted length of their mission.

Two weeks ago, we saw those private-enterprise cowboys, Scaled Composites of Mojave, Calif., shoot a dude into the exosphere, a true first in space annals. There's a lot more where that came from.

And [this month], the massive Cassini-Huygens space probe cased into an orbit around Saturn.

If nothing else, this massive project shows us how sheer vision and brainpower can bring us closer to undreamed-of beauty, especially when we side up to Saturn, loveliest object in a lovely solar system.

Sunday Horoscope

Mercury and Venus are in a friendly aspect, giving new meaning to common exchanges. We're

playing at many levels, like seasoned actors who know how to use words to portray subtle emotions or persuade others to do our bidding. However, expressing love fully and fully will be the best application of this astrological vibe.

Joyce Jillion

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(July 11). Your creative talents will stop costing you so much to develop and start paying you back! Love and money sectors heat up when you cross the borders of countries. Friends introduce singles to new love in September, a passion-filled month. A windfall is available if you set out on an entrepreneurial path in October. Love signs are Virgo and Gemini.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You're attracted to risk — without it, the rewards cannot be achieved. But how much is too much? You can count on Leo and Scorpio to tell you know. You're the one in the middle again tonight. Make it clear this triangle can't go on!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Sunny thoughts rule the day, and you charm all you contact. Though you're encouraged to take the whole day off, you'll feel better if you log in a couple of hours of work. After all, you're driven to dominate your field.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Competitive instincts are full blast, so compete in a game or sport. You have abundant energy for concentration, step-by-step efforts. Tonight, you're feeling uncharacteristically shy in the presence of someone interesting.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

You're a talented student of human nature, and this gives you an edge in anything you choose to do. Your phone rings off the hook. A sweet friend will be your saving grace if you require referral, a pinch hitter or a baby sitter.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Words, letters and communications of all kinds could turn a humdrum day into something quite memorable. New approaches win the prize in every category.

Living for the moment is the way to make the most of non-committal vibes.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Strut your stuff; you've got the right attitude, and people are listening. Your rational mind dismisses the idea of luck — a mistake!

Put some magic into your love life, if not for your partner's sake, for your own.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Invite friends to discuss your ideas and far-out plans. This evening promises interesting events to unfold on the romantic scene. Action that is slightly unreasonable is tolerated and could even be attractive.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

You're such good company that people are overly generous just to keep you around! Watch out that the fool and his money soon separated aren't you this evening, when you'll be gullible and prone to deception.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Dated traditions practically beg you to rework them. Remember that moving forward comes with a price. You must lose the familiarity and comforts of the past.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Tonight, use common sense — only living the truth brings.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

A natural provider, you are ultimately the one who gets nurtured by your nurturing efforts. Children, close friends and relatives rely on you for anything imaginable, but you have the resources. Your warmth is reciprocated.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Make your motto "Join up." Involve yourself where you'll be useful. Financial wins often take careful planning and a judicious allocation of funds. But you can chalk today's coup up to plain old luck.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Rearrange your priorities — something is slightly askew. Friends who are too critical aren't helping matters, either.

Right now, you need pampering.

A home project advances to the next phase with outside help.

Creators Syndicate

Why 'headshrinker' grows

Q. Why are psychiatrists called "headshrinkers?"
The word "headshrinker" as a slang term for "psychiatrist" appears to have originated as Hollywood jargon in the 1940s.

Various theories have arisen as to what the original, unknown user had in mind. Here are a few: The word is meant to suggest "shrinking" or deflating delusions of grandeur, or shrinking or lessening problems in a patient's "worry-balled" head; the word is a reflection of "considerable unconscious hostility" toward mental health professionals; the word implies that a psychiatrist has power beyond our understanding.
A more gruesome theory is that

the originator was thinking of the way psychiatrists figuratively let headshrinkers literally, get "inside" one's head. That "headshrinker" acquired this sense in the mid-1940s isn't surprising when you know that headshrinkers, as practiced by the Jivaro people of the Amazon, then was in the news.

It was during the mid-1950s that the term gained prominence. The Jivaro gave up headshrinkers some decades ago; that may be part of the reason why "headshrinker" is being used and shortened to "shrink" by the 1960s.

This column was prepared by the editors of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition. Readers may send questions to Merriam-Webster's Wordwatch, P.O. Box 261, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

Teen feels depression set in at the same time every year

Dear Abby: I am an 11th-grade girl who should be an all-around happy teenager, but lately I've been depressed. Ever since seventh grade, I've gotten depressed at the same time every year.

The first time it happened there were many reasons for it. Around that time, you published a list of signs that point to depression. I fit all of them except one — thoughts of suicide. Your list made me realize I needed help, and I got it.

For a while I was doing great. But now, every year I get this depression. My mood gets low and I have no energy.

My grades drop. I feel worthless and cry easily.

Is there a reason why this happens, and is there anything I can do about it? (I live in an area where there is little climate change year-round.) Also, could you please publish the signs of depression again? It helped me immensely, and may help others, too.

— Anonymous Teen

Dear Anonymous Teen: I'm certainly willing to publish them again, but before I do, allow me to direct some remarks to you. The fact that your depression

recurs each year is not unusual, I am told. However, it is important that you tell your doctor about it. You should also discuss it with your family. Because depression often runs in families, you may be surprised to discover you are not alone.

Dear Abby: My experts tell me that regardless of age, anyone who experiences any five of the following symptoms for two weeks or more should consult a mental health professional:

- (1) Fatigue or loss of energy.
- (2) Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed.
- (3) Feelings of sadness and/or irritability.
- (4) Inability to concentrate, remember things or make decisions.
- (5) Changes in sleep patterns.
- (6) Changes in weight and appetite.
- (7) Restlessness or decreased activity noticed by others.
- (8) Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless when alone.
- (9) Thoughts of death or suicide.

Dear Abby: I received a card from my husband's aunt, "Millie." With it, she enclosed a check. Millie and I have never met, but her note was warm and

friendly. I wrote back and thanked her.
A few months later, we received another lovely card from Millie with another check enclosed. I'm sending her a thank-you note today, but I'm not sure how to decline future checks. As I understand it, Millie and her husband are elderly and not able to do. Although I appreciate their love and concern for our growing family, I feel uncomfortable accepting monetary gifts from them.

I don't want to appear rude or ungrateful. I would love to continue corresponding with Millie, but I don't want her to feel she has to pay for it. What should I say?

— Checks Always in the Mail
Dear Abby: Thank generous Aunt Millie for her thoughtful. Tell her that you are enjoying the opportunity to get to know her, then deposit the money in the bank. Use it to buy her something lovely at Christmas or something for the children. If you decide to spend it on the children, let her know what you bought for them from their "great" Aunt Millie. It will help them feel closer to you.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box #9400, Los Angeles, CA 90009. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.fox.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate is a subsidiary of 625 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017. SYNDICATE

Boyfriend's sex drive too much for long-distance relationship

Dear Annie: I am a young female college student who has been seeing "Pete" exclusively for two years. We have a wonderful relationship.

Here's the problem: We have been sexually active for six months. The decision for us to consummate our relationship was one of mutual love and respect. However, we are currently attending schools about three hours apart, and we are unable to be together in order to make love more than once or twice a month.

I guess I don't have much of a sex drive, because this is fine for me. Pete is the exact opposite. He has asked that we engage in phone sex to help relieve the pressure of having to wait. I don't mind doing this once in a while, but he wants it more often, and this makes me uncomfortable.

Pete has never directly pressured me, but he claims that after several days of having to contain his desire, it becomes physically painful. I certainly don't want him to suffer, but I don't know how to solve this problem in a mutually respectful way.

I have tried several times to come up with a compromise but haven't found one we both like. Do you have any suggestions?

— Wisconsin Coed
Dear Wisconsin: If phone sex makes you uncomfortable, you shouldn't feel obligated to do it. It's up to Pete to find an acceptable alternative outlet for those times when you aren't in the mood.

"Acceptable" means it does not involve other women. (What on earth does he think he did before phone sex, for heaven's sake?) Keep in mind that incompatible sex drives can be a serious problem in a relationship. If you and Pete should decide to marry, they should decide to resolve this.

Dear Annie: My boyfriend of five years (I'll call him "Sam") has a son who is getting married in a couple of weeks. The invitation reads, "Sam Smith and Guest." His children know we're living together. Why isn't my name on the invitation, too? Worse, I am apparently going to be seated as any other guest. My boyfriend will be escorting his mother.

Shouldn't we have been allowed to walk down together? This whole thing is like a big slap in the face.

— And Guest
Dear Guest: Please don't make an issue of this. We agree they

should have included your name on the invitation, but it's possible they are unfamiliar with the rules of etiquette. You are wrong, however, about being escorted down the aisle by your boyfriend. You are not the groom's mother, and you have no official position at this wedding. You are a guest — nothing more.

Instead of looking for reasons to be hurt and offended, use this as an opportunity to show Sam's family how gracious you can be.

Dear Annie: I am a city letter carrier and often have to help out on unfamiliar mail routes. Trying to find house numbers can be very difficult. Some houses have no numbers, other numbers are in strange places, painted over or hidden. This is inconvenient for me, but it can be disastrous for a firetruck or ambulance is trying to find your house in a hurry.

Please tell your readers to have their house numbers visible from the street.

— Concerned Letter Carrier
Dear Concerned: Thanks for the warning. If you call 911 in the middle of the night, you'd better hope your house numbers are visible.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Jeffrey Sabin, long-time editors of the Ann Landers column. Please send your questions to annie-mailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, P.O. Box 1000, Locust, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Coughlin earns spot on U.S. team

BY BETH HARRIS
The Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Natalie Coughlin finally made her first Olympic swimming team.

Derailed four years ago, she easily won the 100-meter backstroke Friday night in the U.S. trials, finishing 1.39 seconds ahead of former California teammate Haley Cope.

"We've been hatching this plot for a while and it's fun to see it come to fruition," Cope said.

Coughlin's time of 59.85 seconds was off her 2-year-old world record of 59.58, but the only woman to go under a minute in the event did so again. Cope finished in 1.01.24.

"It was perfect," said Coughlin's coach, Teri McKeever. "The goal this week was to make the Olympic team. Now she can go out there and be relaxed. I'm sure after 2000 there's a sense of relief and pride."

Coughlin failed to make the team four years ago, finishing fourth in the 200 individual medley in the trials in Indianapolis.

She was coming off a back injury and didn't have time to prepare.

"I'm a lot more ready this time," she said.

She also is entered in another of her best events, the 100 free on Sunday. Just for fun, she plans to swim the 30 free Wednesday, the elite-day meet's final day.

Making the team is "very much a relief," she said. "I knew it was in me and it just was about getting it done."

Coughlin could have attempted more events at the trials, but the tight schedule would have forced her to swim semis and finals too close together. She gave up both the 200 backstroke (she's the American record holder) and 200 free, and the 100 butterfly.



Natalie Coughlin competes in the 100-meter backstroke final in the U.S. Olympic swim trials in Long Beach, Calif., on Friday.

Michael Phelps handled a busy night in the pool by winning the 200 freestyle in 1 minute, 46.27 seconds. Just 42 minutes later, he advanced to the 200 fly final with the best semifinal time of 1:56.66.

Phelps will take on defending Olympic champion Tom Malchow in the fly — his only race Saturday.

Phelps overcame a poor start — he was last off the starting block — and caught early leader Nate Dusing midway through the third leg of the 200 free before holding off Klete Keller at the finish.

"He just never gets rattled," Phelps' coach Bob Bowman said.

Keller, who already had made the team by winning the 400 free,

claimed another spot by taking second at 1:46.87.

Friendly rivals Aaron Peirsol and Lenny Krayzelburg finished 1-2 in the 100 back.

Peirsol just missed Krayzelburg's world record coming up four-hundredths short in 53.64. Despite an aching shoulder, Krayzelburg finished in 54.06 — just a 10th of a second ahead of Peter Marshall.

"This is such a sweet feeling," said Krayzelburg, who had two shoulder surgeries since sweeping the backstroke events four years ago in Sydney. "Six months ago, I still believed in myself. I just stuck with it, believed and it happened."

Jeff Rouse, the 1992 gold medalist who returned from a six-year retirement, missed out by finishing sixth.

"This heat was absolutely spectacular," said Peirsol, who finished second to Krayzelburg in the 200 back in Sydney. "I tried to remember I've been working for this moment the last four years."

Amanda Beard made her third straight Olympic team over a formidable field in the 100 breaststroke. She held off four-time NCAA champion Tara Kirk and three other former Olympians.

Beard won in 1:07.64. Kirk was second in 1:07.69, while former Olympian Megan Quann came up just short of an Athens berth at 1:07.90. Former Olympians Staci Stitts was fourth (1:08.00) and Kristy Koval seventh (1:08.90).

"It's definitely as exciting as the first two," said Beard, a test case sensation in the 1996 Atlanta Games. "You never get used to this feeling."

Beard advanced to Saturday's final in the 200 IM with the top time. American record holder Lindsay Benko was the fastest qualifier for the 200 free final.

B. Barry agrees to deal with Spurs

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Free agent guard Brent Barry has reached agreement to join the San Antonio Spurs, leaving the Seattle SuperSonics early alongside Tim Duncan and improve his shot at an NBA title.

"Brent called and informed us that if everything goes according to plan, he expects to sign with San Antonio," Sonics General Manager Ric Sund said Saturday. "If that's the case, we certainly wish him well."

The four-year deal is believed to be worth between \$22 and \$24 million.

Seattle initially offered the 32-year-old Barry three years at \$17.75 million, with a counteroffer near San Antonio's proposal being more than the first three years and with a partially guaranteed fourth year.

Instead, Barry chose to join one of the NBA's elite teams. He's also likely to extend his career as a sharp shooter coming off the bench.

Sund refused to confirm details

of either team's proposal. Teams cannot discuss agreements until Wednesday, when free agents can begin signing with teams and the salary cap is set for next season.

Other teams believed to be pursuing Barry included the Portland Trail Blazers and Golden State Warriors.

Barry ranked second in the NBA last season in three-point shooting, making 45.2 percent of his shots. He averaged 10.8 points and 5.8 assists, but the best measure of his value was Seattle's 7-16 record when Barry missed 23 games with a broken right hand.

Arrington going to arbitration

ASHBURN, Va. — As expected, the rift between linebacker LeVar Arrington and the Washington Redskins will have to be settled by an arbitrator.

Arrington, who signed a nine-year, \$68 million contract in December, contends the deal with the Redskins, which was put together quickly because of a salary cap related deadline is missing a \$6.5 million signing bonus for the year 2006.

The Washington Post, which reported the two sides were headed

to arbitration in Friday's editions, said the original hearing was set for Sept. 21 — nine days after Washington's regular-season opener against Tampa Bay. However, it will now be moved up to early next month.

Federer makes Swiss final

GSTAAD, Switzerland — Wimbledon champion Roger Federer overcame fatigue and rain delays to beat qualifier Potito Starace 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 Saturday, advancing to the Swiss Open final.

Federer will play two matches Friday because of rain delays throughout the week, beat Starace in 1 hour, 30 minutes in a match that was interrupted for 30 minutes overall by rain.

Federer will face Igor Andreev in the final. Andreev beat third-seeded Rainer Schüttler 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (6).

Swedish open semis rained out

BASTAD, Sweden — The semifinals in singles and doubles were rained out Saturday in the Swedish Open.

Weather permitting, the matches are played Sunday morning followed by the finals early afternoon.



Marion Jones and Angela Williams, left, compete in the 100-meter heats during the U.S. track and field trials in Sacramento, Calif., Friday.

Jones struggles on first day of trials

By BOB BAUM

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Marion Jones wasn't talking during the first day of the U.S. track and field trials. She wasn't running all that fast, either.

Jones was the seventh-fastest of the 16 qualifiers in the 100-meter quarterfinals Friday at 11.38 seconds, then slipped off the track the back way, sending notice she wasn't talking to reporters until after the final.

Laurny Williams, the 20-year-old NCAA champion from Miami who has the second-best time in the world this year (10.97), was the fastest qualifier at 11.13 seconds. All of the runners raced into a head wind at the Cal State-Sacramento track.

"Really great, super great," she said. "Things weren't coming together out on the practice track and I was pretty nervous. But it turned out to be a good nervous."

Four years ago, Jones blew away the competition in the trials in the 100, including a 10.92 in the quarterfinals. She went on to win an unprecedented five track medals in the Sydney Games, three of them gold.

But she took last year off to have a baby, and this year has been preparing for her Olympic bid under the cloud of an investigation by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency.

She has repeatedly, vehemently denied ever taking performance-enhancing substances. Jones has not been accused of doping offenses, but her boyfriend Tim Montgomery has been charged with taking banned performance enhancers and could face a lifetime ban, even though he did not test positive.

The charges against Montgomery and three others competing in the trials stem from the criminal

investigation into the Bay Area Laboratory Cooperative. Chryste Gaines, one of the four accused, was eighth-fastest in the 100 qualifying in 11.39.

"That could explain why the normally outgoing, smiling Jones, who usually has no problem stopping to chat briefly with reporters after qualifying rounds, was grim through her brief time on the track Friday."

"She isn't at the point where she was in previous years," said Inger Miller, the 1999 world champion and second-fastest in the quarterfinals Friday with a time of 11.28. "It's yet to be seen where she is."

The 100 is the first of Jones' three events at the trials. She also plans to compete in the long jump and 200.

Meb Keflezighi was the meet's first winner, running away with the men's 10,000 in 27 minutes, 36.49 seconds. He broke the trial record set 24 years ago by Craig Virgin, but the time was only the 15th-fastest in the world this year.

The top three in each event in the nine-day trials will make the U.S. team in Athens, providing they've met the Olympic qualifying standard. The top three in the 10,000 — Keflezighi, Abdi Abdirahman and Dan Browne — have met the standard.

Keflezighi and Browne also have qualified for the marathon, and both have indicated they could run in that race only.

Bob Kennedy, three-time U.S. champion in the 5,000, dropped out of the 10,000 with a strained left Achilles' tendon.

"The old body just isn't as young as it used to be," he said.

American record holder and three-time U.S. champion Jeff Hartwig failed to clear a qualifying height in the pole vault, just as he did four years ago.

Coceres holds one-stroke lead in rain-delayed Deere Classic

The Associated Press

SILVUS, Ill. — Jose Coceres birdied the 17th hole for a 3-under 68 Saturday and one-stroke lead after two rounds of the rain-delayed John Deere Classic.

Coceres moved to 12-under 141, one shot ahead of Greg Chalmers (67), heading into the third round later Saturday.

About half the field was forced to complete the second round Saturday, one day after play was delayed for three hours because of rain and later suspended because of lightning.

Vaughn Taylor (69) was two shots back at 10-under 132, and Mark Hensby shot a second-round 65 to move into fourth at 9 under.

Ten players were tied for fifth at 7 under.

Derailed by a broken arm and bad play since winning twice in 2001, Coceres has held the lead after both rounds at the TPC at Deere Run. It's the first time he has had the lead this late in a tournament since winning the National Car Rental Classic in 2001.

He also won the Worldom Classic that year.

"The most important thing right now is that in my mind, I'm doing very well," the 40-year-old Argentine player said through a translator. "I really want to have a good tournament. I'm ready to have a good tournament."

Coceres was 2 under through 11 holes in the second round and 11 under overall when play was suspended.

Coceres said the extra holes shouldn't be a problem.

"I'm in good shape," he said. "I'm 40, but I'm a good 40."

Coceres, a former caddy who

Golf roundup

taught himself to play with clubs fashioned from branches, was the first-round leader after a career-best 62.

Vijay Singh, last year's champion, shot a 67 to reach 6 under.

Singh leads the tour with three victories this year and surprised some by returning to the Deere Classic a week before the British Open.

Fraser hoping to qualify for British Open

LUSS, Scotland — An injury kept Marcus Fraser of Australia from even getting a chance to qualify for his first British Open. A brilliant round of 7-under 64 in the Scottish Open on Saturday gave him one last hope.

Fraser shot into contention with a 30 on the front nine and wound up in a share of the lead with Gregory Havret of France, two guys who will be playing for more than just first-place prize money and another European tour victory.

The top finisher at Loch Lomond not already eligible earns a place in the field at next week's British Open.

"Everyone knows there's one spot up for grabs, and everyone is trying to grab it," Fraser said, who had to withdraw from a British Open qualifier earlier this year with a shoulder injury.

Havret, who failed to earn a spot at a European qualifying two weeks ago, birdied five of the first eight holes and looked as if he might run away from the field, but had only one birdie and a bogey the rest of the way for a

5-under 66 to join Fraser at 14-under 199.

Michael Campbell matched the best round of the week with a 63, including one of only two double-birdies on the 18th that left him one shot out of the lead. David Howell of England (67) was at 201, while Peter Lonard got into the mix with a 66 that put him at 11-under 202.

Ernie Els also gave himself a chance to defend his title in the Barclays Scottish Open. Despite a brief confrontation with a photographer, the Big Easy kept his cool long enough to shoot 65 and was among those four shots behind.

"It's a little bit difficult to get into the week," said Els, playing for the first time since an 80 in the final round of the U.S. Open. "Now that I'm in, I'm going to try to win the tournament."

Also at 10-under 203 was Roger Chapman, the next highest player on the leader board not yet in the British Open.

Mallon still ahead despite shaky second round

NIAGARA FALLS, Ontario — Even when Meg Mallon missed, things went her way.

On the 13th hole Friday in the second round of the Canadian Women's Open, Mallon banged her approach shot off a dead tree. It eventually cost her a stroke, but at least the ball landed in the middle of the 13th fairway — and not 4 yards farther into the woods.

"Thank god it went where it went," Mallon said. "I'll take a bogey there."

Mallon can smile because her worst outing in her last four rounds — going back to her U.S. Women's Open victory last weekend — was still good enough to keep her atop the leader board.

Mallon overcame two bogeys for a 2-under 70 and a 9-under 135 total. That have her a one-stroke lead over Lorena Ochoa, the young Mexican star who shot a 67 on the Legends on the Niagara's Battlefield course. And that's good enough for Mallon to believe that maybe the worst is behind her.

Defending champion Beth Daniel (68), Gloria Park (70), Canadian Dawn Co-Jones (69) and rookie Aree Song (66) were two strokes back at 7 under. Nancy Seranin (69) was 6 under, and Mi Hyun Kim, fifth on the LPGA Tour money list, shot a 70 to top a group at 5 under.

Three tied atop Senior field

DEARBORN, Mich. — Gary McCord had an 8-under 64 at the Senior Players Championship and was tied for the lead at 10 under with Jose Maria Canizares, who had a 66.

First-round leader Gil Morgan followed up his 65 with a 2-under 70 and was at 9 under, tied for second place with Dana Quigley and Mark James. Ed Flori and Doug Tewell will start the third round of the Champion Tour's second of five majors another stroke back.

Defending champion Craig Stadler and Bruce Fleisher were among a group of four at 7 under at the TPC of Michigan.



Overall leader Thomas Voeckler, of France, rides with the pack during the sixth stage of the Tour de France on Saturday.

Armstrong finishes with pack, still 6th

BY JAMEY KEATEN

The Associated Press

SAINT-BRIEUC, France — Lance Armstrong finished in a pack of riders behind Italy's Filippo Pozzato in the seventh stage of the Tour de France on Saturday, and remained in sixth place overall after the first week of cycling's premier race.

Pozzato, Armstrong, trying for a record sixth straight Tour victory, finished the stage 55th, 10 seconds behind the winner. He has been ceding stage wins to lesser-known rivals and sprinters early in the three-week race, waiting for harder stages to make his push to the front.

Pozzato, of the Passo Bartolo team, led a three-man breakaway and finished the 127.08-mile leg from Chateaubriant to Saint-Brieuc in 4 hours, 31 minutes and 34 seconds — just ahead of Spanish riders Iker Flores of Euskaltel-Euskadi and Francisco Mancho of Illes Balears-B. Santander.

"It's the most beautiful win of my career," said Pozzato, a 22-year-old rider in his first Tour. "It's a very nice win after a hard finish."

Armstrong is 9 minutes, 35 seconds behind overall leader Thomas Voeckler of France, who crossed the line in the peloton with the 32-year-old Texan and retained the overall leader's yellow jersey.

Jan Ullrich, the 1997 Tour champion and Armstrong's chival, placed 30th in the stage, 10 seconds behind. He is in 22nd place overall, 10:30 back.

Cyclists faced brief showers and windy conditions in the stage, adding to nervous riding.

"We all anticipated that the coast there would be windy and it was for a little bit when it was storming, but it lined up after we got dry," Armstrong said. "It was a kind of scary for a while. But what's new?" he said, referring to a first week filled with crashes, including one that briefly brought down the champion on Friday.

The Danish CSC team took advantage of the rain and pounced upon an unsuspecting pack as it swung past the Brittany coast near the 93-mile mark. The pack, led partly by Armstrong's U.S. Postal Service team, gave chase and reeled them in.

Armstrong said there was little flair to Saturday's stage, but that was needed after a week of rain-soaked roads and crashes. "I thought you'd have more spice in the race, but I think guys are tired and stressed from all the crashes," he said.

Cyclists ran into all sorts of fan hazards in the last 6.2 miles, including smoky fumes and crowds spilling into the streets as the riders roared by.

For a second straight day, Armstrong had critical words for Tour organizers, saying they should have planned a time trial in the first week to ease the nervousness in early, flat stages.

Earlier Saturday, the Tour announced that Belgian rider Christophe Brandt tested positive for methadone and withdrew from the race.

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Red-hot Gordon grabs fourth straight pole

BY NANCY ARMOUR

The Associated Press

JOLIEF, Ill. — No matter what Jeff Gordon and his crew did in the training practice today, he kept winning up fourth or fifth.

He wasn't just getting edged out, either. Other cars were easily beating him, and Gordon didn't know where he would find the extra speed to make another run at the pole.

But as he has with stunning regularity recently, Gordon came through when it counted. He won his fourth straight pole on the NASCAR Nextel Cup circuit Friday, shattering the track record in the Tropicana 400 with a lap of 186.942 mph.

That's more than 2 mph better than the previous mark of 184.786 mph set last year by Tony Stewart.

"I say this every weekend how shocked I am to be here," Gordon said, "but I am."

Qualifying was delayed two hours because of thunderstorms, and Gordon took advantage of the cooler track. He ran one lap on the 1½-mile track, beating the early standard of 186.871 mph set by rookie Kasey Kahne, and decided that was all he needed.

"You just hold on tight and hope that it sticks," he said. "I knew it was a good lap, and I hoped that it was because I couldn't make a second one."

Gordon is the first driver to win

four straight poles since Bill Elliott in 1985, and is one shy of the NASCAR modern era record set by Bobby Allison in 1972 and matched by Cale Yarborough in 1980 and Elliott in 1985.

The pole was the 51st of Gordon's career, tying Bobby Isaac for seventh on the career list.

Jimmie Johnson, the series points leader and Gordon's teammate, took his turn about 30 minutes later after Gordon, but a lap of 186.290 mph was only good enough for third. Brian Vickers was next at 185.750 mph, giving Hendrick Motorsports three of the top four teams.

"I knew it was going to be real close to having Gordon beat it," Kahne said. "It felt good, better

than what we had in practice. It was definitely close to getting the pole, but Jeff just got us."

That's been happening a lot lately. After bad runs at Charlotte and Dover, Gordon began a run at Michigan that has left even him amazed. He won the pole at Michigan and led 81 of 88 laps.

He won his next two races, starting from the pole each time.

"I've been very fortunate to have some good streaks along the way, but this streak is pretty amazing right now," he said. "I just want to maintain this one as long as I can."

Though Gordon is the only driver to run every lap at Chicagoland Speedway, he has never won here, one of only four tracks on

the circuit where he doesn't have a victory. His best finish is second in 2002.

But if he keeps doing what he's been doing, that could change Sunday.

"With each week that we go, that we sit on another pole, that we win another race, the confidence level just gets higher and higher," he said.

Gordon trails Johnson by 232 points, a whopping margin in years past. But this year, NASCAR will reset the field with 10 races to go and all drivers in the top 10 and any others within 400 points of the leader will run for the championship.

"Whoever is peaking in those final 10 will be the champion," Johnson said.

Celebrity: Escaping father's tall shadow wasn't easy

CELEBRITY, FROM BACK PAGE

"One time in a crowd," Gussis says, "I got knocked down to the ground. I mean, flat on my back in the middle of that crowd, and for a few moments I couldn't even get up. He didn't come back and try to help or anything. He just looked at me and started laughing."

'Junior' turns 30?

Shocking and dismal as the thought may be to the NASCAR nation, Earnhardt is closing fast on age 30. In most lives this is a bleak countdown, the first signs of aging, of youth lost. But Earnhardt senses he is hurtling down the homestretch toward some blessed relief.

"I look forward to it," he says, as if the next three moments can't pass fast enough. "I don't know why, but I feel like it'll take a lot of pressure off of me."

Maybe the music and media and his peers among NASCAR drivers will last turn their attentions from what he's going to be, could be, should be, to what he is.

"I think with the coming of maturity comes respect," he says. "I want all of that I can get. ... It's funny when people refer to you as 'this kid,' or 'the kid.' You hear that all these years, and you hear 'Junior' this and 'Junior' that. I'm looking forward to turning over that chapter in my life."

And 30, which comes Oct. 10, may well bring another milestone in November. Near the halfway point of his fifth season in the big time, he is a stronger contender than ever to win his first Nextel Cup. Then again, that means there'll be the inevitable extra baggage he already dreads. The comparisons, the questions, the reflexes.

"If and when I win a championship, it'll be ... I don't know. I should just not even concern myself with it," he says. "Because I am his son, and I knew that coming. I was with my father dead or alive, it was going to make a difference."

He will be revisited by the enormity of the burden that always begins with the written or spoken words: "Son of seven-time Winston Cup champion Dale Earnhardt." The driver with 76 career victories.

The Man in Black. The Intimidator.

The shadow was long enough to make escape impossible, even before the elder Earnhardt was killed in the 2001 Daytona 500, leading NASCAR czar Bill France Jr. to say, "NASCAR has lost its greatest driver ever."

After that, there was no one left to speak for the lineage but the surviving star of the family.

"I was always asked to talk about him,"



Courtesy of NASCAR

Dale Earnhardt Jr. (8) races against Jimmie Johnson in the Coca-Cola 600 at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. Johnson and Earnhardt are running 1-2 in the NASCAR Nextel Cup points standings entering Sunday's Tropicana 400 at Chicagoland Speedway.

Earnhardt says. "We told the same damn stories over and over and over. And it just kind of got old, you know? We did it over and over and over and over — how Dale Jr. was doing ever since the day his dad was killed. We ran it into the ground."

Finally last offseason, he was feeling some relief, feeling "like my own man." The nation's grip on the "son of" aspect was loosening at last. Then Dale Jr. won the 2004 Daytona 500, and the avalanche of comparison started anew.

"Everybody was like, 'It's been so many days and years since his dad was killed, so many days and years since his dad won here last,'" he says. "And I'm like, 'Damn, man. Why the numbers? What's the point?' What difference does it make that [my] dad won this race six years ago. Darrell Waltrip won it 15 years ago, and all those other people had their years."

"I swear, when I won that race, the emotion of winning that race, and that day, and the people I was with, was mainly all it was feeling. There weren't any memories. None of that stuff. I never thought about it the whole day."

But in the aftermath, "everybody wanted to talk about how it was connected to my dad in one way or another. And it was like, man, I don't need those links and connections. It's not necessary. We won the race. Write the story about the racing."

That takes none of the thrill out of his return to Daytona International Speedway,

his father died.

"It's Daytona, so of course it's special to me and my team to go back there," he says.

A regular guy

The SUV stops suddenly where half a dozen security guards wait at the gate to a fenced compound with hundreds of fans inside, having paid for the privilege of seeing Dale Earnhardt Jr. up close.

There'll be no autographs. There's not nearly enough time. Signing one would set off the frenzy, and he'd have to sign a thousand. So to please the fans, Earnhardt will grab a microphone and engage in the new staple of NASCAR personal appearances, the Q&A session.

In a matter of seconds, in the swarm of security, he is whisked the eight or 10 feet from the SUV into the compound — and still there are the toy cars, caps, T-shirts and jackets fans hold out desperately, pleading for a signature.

His emergence onto the stage evokes a roar from within the compound, and from without, now the milling legions know who was in the vehicle with the sirens and flashing lights.

From the crowd, a question: "What do you think you would be doing if you weren't driving cars?"

The answer: "Probably working on them at some dealership. After I got out of high school, I worked at a dealership for three and a half years."

And there it is, his certification as Everyman, one who has labored in obscurity like them, is not above them, is from among them.

Except for the name that has been both his wings and his chains.

Even if he remained a dealership mechanic today, he would still be Dale Earnhardt Jr., answering the opposite kind of questions: Why didn't he race? Why isn't he at the pinnacle?

The appearance ends, and the knot of white-shirted guards tightens around him again for the 10-second sweep back into the SUV, and the doors close to the refrains of a woman's voice: "Just one picture! Just one picture!"

A comfort level

What troubled him most during his first few seasons in Cup wasn't so much the great expectations as that he didn't feel he was fulfilling them. He wasn't winning enough, wasn't running up front consistently, wasn't contending for the championship. His father had almost personally built into the primary goal of any NASCAR driver.

He has three wins this season, tied with Jimmie Johnson and Jeff Gordon for most on the tour. He and Johnson are dueling atop the point standings. He's 27 behind Johnson, and his Dale Earnhardt Inc. team has found the key to championships: getting the best finish possible out of a bad day when the car isn't capable of winning.

"I used to look at our team as incomplete, inconsistent, incapable, hit-and-miss," Earnhardt says. "Now I look at our team as solid, a standard, a mainstay up toward the front of the field, a good car capable of going everywhere and running good."

He doesn't worry about the standings because NASCAR's new system this year will take the top 10 in points, bunch them up with only a 50-point differential between first and last. He'll turn them into a "championship chase," a sort of playoff, for the final 10 races of the season.

"Being in the lead in points — all it is right now is bragging rights," he says. "It's not."

At last, at least, he feels comfortable that he is living up to billing.

"I feel cured in the sport," he says, meaning "content." "I feel like a mainstay now. I feel long-term."

And on his own, he is an icon.

Tomjanovich agrees to coach Lakers

BY JOHN NADEL

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Lakers finally have a coach. The next step in a summer of change is determining their roster.

Rudy Tomjanovich agreed to coach the Lakers — a longtime advance in more ways than one — following a 34-year relationship with the Rockets.

"We expect that he'll sign a contract and we'll hold a press conference tomorrow to announce it," Lakers spokesman John Black said Friday.

Tomjanovich succeeds Phil Jackson, who coached the Lakers to three championships in five years. The team announced June 18, three days after losing to the Detroit Pistons in the NBA Finals, that Jackson wouldn't return next season.

Tomjanovich survived one of the scariest moments in NBA history on Dec. 9, 1977, at The Forum in nearby Inglewood when Lakers forward Kermit Washington blindsided him with a devastating punch that sent him



Tomjanovich

crashing to the floor with several shattered facial bones.

Doctors said the injuries were life-threatening, but Tomjanovich returned the following season wearing a protective mask and made one of his five appearances in the NBA All-Star Game.

Tomjanovich filed a civil suit against the Lakers. He was awarded \$3.25 million by a jury, but the \$2 million settlement was reached before an appeal was heard.

The 55-year-old Tomjanovich coached the Rockets for 12 years before stepping down in May 2003 — two months after being diagnosed with bladder cancer. He negotiated a settlement of the remaining two years and \$12 million left on his coaching contract.

In good health now, he worked as a scout with Houston last sea-

son — his 34th year with the organization he joined in 1970 in San Diego as the second overall selection in the NBA Draft.

Tomjanovich guided the Rockets to championships in 1994 and 1995 and was the winningest coach in their history with a 503-397 record.

He failed to make the playoffs in his last four years there.

He joins an unsettled team — Kobe Bryant is an unrestricted free agent and Shaquille O'Neal has demanded a trade. Derek Fisher and Karl Malone also are unrestricted free agents.

Tomjanovich, one of the first candidates interviewed, had to wait as the Lakers discussed the job with Miami Heat President

Pat Riley, Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski and North Carolina coach Roy Williams. Riley, a winner of 1,110 games in 21 seasons — the first nine with the Lakers — said he spoke with Lakers officials but wasn't offered the position.

An offer was made last week to Krzyzewski, who announced Monday he was staying at Duke. Williams told the Lakers last month he wasn't interested in the job.

It's believed Tomjanovich agreed to terms of a five-year contract worth about \$30 million — a deal similar to the one Jackson signed in June 1999.

Black wouldn't comment on contract terms.

The Lakers have reportedly

stepped up efforts to trade O'Neal, who has insisted he won't play for them again. A possible destination could be Miami.

Quoting sources, the Riverside Press-Enterprise reported Thursday the Lakers were considering a deal that would include Lamar Odom, Brian Grant and a first-round Miami draft pick. Caron Butler also has been mentioned. Black refused to comment.

Bryant has met with representatives of the Lakers, Clippers, Denver Nuggets and New York Knicks this week and reportedly could make a decision as soon as this weekend. Free agents can sign contracts beginning July 14.

Calls to the representatives for Bryant and O'Neal weren't returned.

Magic say deal for Shaq is impossible this season

BY TIM POVATK

The Orlando Sentinel

ORLANDO, Fla. — Shaquille O'Neal may be leaving the Los Angeles Lakers, but he isn't coming to Orlando — except on summer vacation.

O'Neal listed five cities where he would be happy to go, but at least one — Orlando — is now out of the question.

If he really wants to play again with the Magic — where he started his career and often has said he would like to finish it — it won't be next season, according to Magic General Manager John Weisbrod.

"It's an impossibility," Weisbrod said Friday during Summer League action at the RDV Sportplex. "The DeVos family (ownership) still thinks fondly of Shaq — and he'd make an immediate impact — but it's just not going to happen here. Not now."

If O'Neal really wants to return to Florida, his only option will be Miami, where the Heat remain in contention for his services.

O'Neal, 32, originally listed the Sacramento Kings, Dallas Mavericks, New Orleans Hornets, Miami Heat and Orlando Magic as teams he prefers, but a source close to him believes the Lakers now are seriously considering offers from only Miami, Dallas and Indiana.

The biggest stumbling block that Orlando, or anyone else, would face in obtaining him is his contract. He is scheduled to make \$29.4 million next season and \$32.4 million in 2005-2006.

He has the option of becoming a free agent after next season, allowing him to go wherever his big heart desires — as long as he is willing to forego that \$32.4 million.

Until then, though, anyone trading for him must trade back enough players that make worth 15 percent (plus \$100,000) of his salary.



Los Angeles Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal, right, chats with reporters after leaving a real estate office in Orlando, Fla., on Saturday.

Most NBA teams would have to gut their roster to make it happen, leaving them with O'Neal and little else on the team.

Being the highest paid player in the league carries prestige, but it also limits the options.

Unless the Lakers would take Grant Hill (\$14.4 million) — and why would they after he missed the last four seasons with ankle problems — the Magic would have to send back Steve Francis (\$11.32 million), Kelvin Cato (\$7.9 million), Cuttino Mobley (\$5.8 million) and either No. 1 pick Dwight Howard (\$3.2 million) or Drew Gooden (\$3.2 million) to make it work.

Weisbrod said he talked with one of O'Neal's representatives, who called to say he would welcome a trade to Orlando, but he never has talked to Lakers General Manager Mitch Kupchak about a trade for O'Neal.

"I've never spoken to Mitch on it. It's just not reality for us at this

stage of the game," Weisbrod said. "It's certainly something we would have interest in thinking about, but we've done the math hypothetically and concluded it's an impossibility."

According to a good friend and another star in the NBA, O'Neal has vowed not to return to the Lakers, where he has played the last eight seasons since leaving the Magic, winning three NBA titles.

His biggest problem involves playing again with co-star Kobe Bryant, whom the Lakers are desperately trying to re-sign now as a free agent. Only one of the two is likely to be with the Lakers next season.

Their often-strained relationship reached an all-time low this past season, leading to a defeat in the NBA Finals.

Miami, Indiana and Dallas all have put together attractive packages that would work financially, but none that the Lakers have accepted yet. Trades can't be made officially until July 14, the first day free agents can be signed.

Messages of Support

★ We would like you to know that we love and appreciate everything that you do for our country. Words cannot describe our thanks to you for your sacrifices and your continuing service for us (Americans). No matter what you may hear America is behind you all the way. We support you and love you. You will always be in my prayers. Shona from Tennessee

★ R. M. Hicks - We are so proud of you son! Miss you dearly. Can't wait till you get home. I'll make a home cook meal. Tell your troops that prayers all over the world are being said for them. Love Mom & Dad

★ We love you. We support you. We thank you. B. J. Casazza, Tewksbury, MA

★ Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you and that we look forward to your safe return home. Till then, take care, and God Bless you. Deb & Elaine

★ I hope you all are ok. I appreciate everything you are doing. Thanks for all you do to give us FREEDOM!!!!!! Thanks again Crystal, Ozark, Alabama

★ Dear Jim/Daddy, We want you to know that we love you and miss very much and you are in our thoughts and prayers everyday. We are very proud of you. Keep your faith and your spirits high. Thank you for the sacrifices you make not only for our family but for our country. Lisa, Jim, Daniel, & Zachary

★ To American Military and our Allies: To say thank you seems so inadequate for what I and so many others feel toward you. What you are doing for us is priceless. What kind of world would we live in if not for people like you? Please try to ignore those who are negative. They just don't see the "big picture." We are ALL for peace—but sometimes we have to fight for it, unfortunately. All of our lives are precious to us and you are never out of our thoughts and prayers. Thank you again and God be with you. Debby from Dallas, Tx.

★ I just want to let my wife, HMD Sherri L. Kennedy, who is stationed aboard the USSN Comfort, that I love and miss her very much. Isabel, her 3 year old daughter, and I are so proud of what she is doing over there. We can't wait for her to come home....

Lee busts out for White Sox

Slugger homers twice; Seattle loses seventh straight

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Carlos Lee is starting to find his power stroke just in time for the Chicago White Sox.

Lee homered twice and drove in five runs, and Jon Garland pitched seven solid innings to lead Chicago over the slumping Seattle Mariners 6-2 Friday night.

With slugger Frank Thomas headed to the disabled list, the White Sox need some big hits from Lee — and he's beginning to deliver.

Lee has three homers in two home runs and has hit four of his nine home runs in the last week.

"I had a great approach going the other way, but I couldn't get to the inside pitch as well. Now

that I got it I just have to keep on working on it," Lee said. "Just don't try to do too much, swing at strikes and let the bat do it."

The Mariners have lost a season-high seven straight games. At 32-52, Seattle is 20 games below .500 for the first time since Aug. 5, 1994. They've also lost 10 straight on the road.

Seattle manager Bob Melvin doesn't think the Mariners are getting complacent.

"It's dangerous to just go through the motions and I don't think we were," Melvin said.

Magglio Ordonez went 2-for-4 with an RBI for Chicago in his first game since coming off the disabled list. The All-Star slugger missed 36 games after tearing cartilage in his left knee.

"Not too many players come out like that on live pitching," White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen said. "Hopefully, he can continue to do that and make my lineup stronger."

The White Sox learned before the game they will lose Thomas to an injury. Chicago plans to put Thomas on the 15-day disabled list Saturday because of inflammation in his left ankle.

"We are going to miss his bat. Frank is one of the best hitters in the game," Ordonez said.

Garland (7-5) allowed just one run and four hits. He struck out three and walked one. Danos Marte and Shingo Takatsu finished the seven-inning.

"We pitched good and we hit the ball, that's a good combination," Garland said.

Red Sox follow Damon's lead

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Johnny Damon and the Boston Red Sox aren't ready to concede the AL East title just yet.

Damon went 4-for-5 with two homers and four RBIs. Arroyo allowed three hits in eight innings for his first win since May 15 and Boston beat the Texas Rangers 7-0 Friday night.

The Red Sox won their fourth straight, their longest streak since winning five in a row May 21-26. After falling 8½ games behind the first-place New York Yankees last week, Boston has cut the deficit to six.

"I wish I knew what I was doing so I could bottle it up and keep it going," Damon said. "We feel like we can still win the East and don't like to be written off."

Damon, who extended his hitting streak to 14 games with a first-inning single, led off the fifth with his eighth home run to put Boston ahead 2-0. He followed with a two-out double in the sixth that drove in a pair of runs and made it 5-0. Damon homered into the Rangers' bullpen in the eighth and finished a triple shy of the cycle. He's batted .447 during his hitting streak, the longest by a Red Sox player this season.

With Boston ahead 2-0, Nomar Garciaparra led off the sixth with a single, and Texas starter Joaquin Benoit walked Trot Nixon and hit Kevin Millar with a pitch to lead the bases.

Flueller's line fly made it 3-0, and Damon's double off reliever Ron Mahay drove home Nixon and Millar.



Boston's Johnny Damon, right, is embraced by teammate David Ortiz after his fifth-inning home run in the Red Sox's 7-0 victory over the Texas Rangers.

Nixon gave the Red Sox a 6-0 lead with an RBI single in the seventh.

Arroyo (3-7) matched his season high with seven strikeouts and allowed just one hit after the first inning, lowering his ERA from 4.50 to 4.09 while earning his first career win at Fenway Park.

Considering the recent struggles of Derek Lowe and a dearth of quality starters on the trade market, Boston's best hope for a boost for their rotation remains Arroyo, who had dropped six straight decisions but has a 2.44 ERA in his past six starts.

"We can let [Arroyo] hide in the weeds. That's what our horses are for in the front of the rotation," catcher Jason Varitek said.

Curtis Leskanen pitched a perfect ninth to finish Boston's eighth shutout of the season. The Rangers were blanked for the fourth time.

Quantrill pitches Yankees out of jam

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Bases loaded, one runner home, 2-0 down.

Paul Quantrill didn't have much room for error when the New York Yankees brought him into the game in the sixth inning Friday night.

"I'm not too sure of how many people I'd want to do that to," Yankees manager Joe Torre said after putting the pressure on

Quantrill.

Jorge Posada hit a go-ahead, two-run single for the Yankees, who have won two straight against the Devil Rays after losing five of six to the New York Mets and Detroit.

Tampa Bay, which has lost seven of 10 to the Yankees this season, dropped to 4-6 in July after going 20-6 in June.

"We're getting our chances to put some runs on the board. Now we can't get them," said Rocco Baldelli, who popped to first baseman Tony Clark in foul territory for the final out.

A day after he was selected for his first All-Star Game, Javier

Vazquez (10-5) fell behind 3-1 on Jose Cruz Jr.'s two-run homer in the first and Robert Fick's solo shot in the fourth. But Posada singled to cap a three-run fifth that put New York ahead 4-3.

Vazquez opened the sixth by fanning Baldelli, giving him a season-high nine strikeouts, but left after walking the bases loaded with two outs.

Quantrill relieved with a 2-0 count on Hall, who then took a strike and fouled off two pitches. After taking half a pitch to work the count full, Hall fouled off three more pitches before flying to center.



Cleveland Indians pinch hitter Lou Merloni celebrates his game-winning two-run single off Oakland Athletics pitcher Octavio Dotel in the ninth inning Friday in Cleveland. The Indians beat the Athletics 5-4.

Dotel disappoints as Indians top A's again

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Even with a new closer, the Oakland Athletics couldn't put away those pesky Cleveland Indians.

Pinch-hitter Lou Merloni's two-run single off Octavio Dotel in the ninth inning gave Cleveland another thrilling victory over the Athletics, 5-4 on Friday night.

"The Indians have beaten the A's four straight times at home this season — with one coming in their final at-bat."

"It's kind of a broken record here," Oakland manager Ken Macha said. "That's four in a row."

Cleveland had been 0-30 when trailing after eight innings. But the Indians rallied for three runs against Dotel, acquired from Houston in a three-way trade June 25 to shore up Oakland's shaky bullpen.

He hasn't been the answer. Dotel (1-1) has a 6.97 ERA and two blown saves in four chances with the A's.

The hard-throwing right-hander knew he grooved his first pitch to Merloni.

"I was trying to get ahead," Dotel said. "I didn't want to throw a breaking pitch."

Oakland took a two-run lead into the ninth, but Travis Hafner's RBI double cut it to 4-3.

With the bases loaded and two outs, Merloni lined the first pitch from Dotel down the left-field line to score Omar Vizquel and Hafner before being mugged by his teammates.

"My first walk-off hit ever," Merloni said. "It's kind of a ritual here to get beat up when you do it. I've got to go ice my knee."

Cleveland's latest dramatic victory over Oakland gave reliever

AL Roundup

Bobby Howry (1-0) his first win since Aug. 21, 2002, for the Chicago White Sox.

The A's have dropped four in a row overall.

Eric Chavez was back in Oakland's lineup after missing more than five weeks with a broken right hand. The third baseman went 2-for-3 with an RBI, walked twice, scored a run and made a dazzling defensive play in the eighth inning.

Angels 5, Blue Jays 4: A Bartolo Colon (6-8) pitched seven solid innings for his second win in 11 starts, and Vladimir Guerrero drove in three runs for visiting Anaheim.

Francisco Rodriguez pitched a perfect eighth, and Troy Percival got his 14th save in 18 chances.

AL Cy Young Award winner Roy Halladay (7-6) gave up five runs in a career-high 12 hits — all singles — in six innings.

Royals 7, Orioles 0: Mike Sweeney ended Kansas City's club-record streak of 32 scoreless innings with a two-run double in the sixth, and the Royals won on the road to snap an eight-game skid.

Darrell May (6-9) pitched a five-hitter for his third career shutout, just 11 days after yielding seven runs and eight hits in a 10-1 loss to Baltimore.

Twins 5, Twins 3: Jason Smith hit two of Detroit's three homers, and Carlos Guillen had a three-run shot at the Metrodome.

Gary Knotts (5-3) beat Carlos Silva (8-7) for his first win in five starts, and Ugueth Urbina earned his 13th save in 15 chances.

Phillies' Perez delivers in pinch

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Tomas Perez was slapped around, shoved and covered in shaving cream. The Philadelphia Phillies sure know how to celebrate comeback victories.

Perez's pinch-hit RBI single in the 10th inning helped the Phillies overcome a five-run deficit and two three-run homers by Rafael Furcal to beat the Atlanta Braves 7-6 on Friday night.

The Phillies mobbed Perez after his hit gave them their 29th come-from-behind win. During his postgame interview, Perez was doused with shaving-cream pies by some of his teammates.

A night after Bobby Abreu got a pie in the face from Perez for hitting a walk-off homer to beat the New York Mets, Chase Utley put Perez in position to be the big star.

Utley's solo homer off John Smoltz with one out in the ninth tied it at 6.

"The best to come back and win the game, especially against



one of the best closers," Perez said.

Mike Lieberthal had four RBIs, including a three-run homer in the eighth, and Billy Wagner (3-0) got two outs in the 10th for his second win in two nights.

Pirates 11, Expos 0: At San Juan, Puerto Rico, Jason Bay homered twice and Pittsburgh scored a season-high nine times in the second inning to beat Sean Burnett's first career win.

Burnett (3-2) scattered 10 hits, struck out three and walked none, helping Pittsburgh to its fourth shutout.

Mets 6, Marlins 3: Ty Wigginton homered and hit an RBI double and Mike Cameron also went to the visiting Mets, who scored four runs in the eighth inning to win for the seventh time in nine games.

Astros 3, Dodgers 2: Andy Pettitte (5-2) outpitched former teammate Jeff Weaver (6-9) and also drove in a run, and Jose Vizcaino

hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the eighth inning for visiting Houston.

Carlos Beltran hit his fifth homer in 14 games with the Astros.

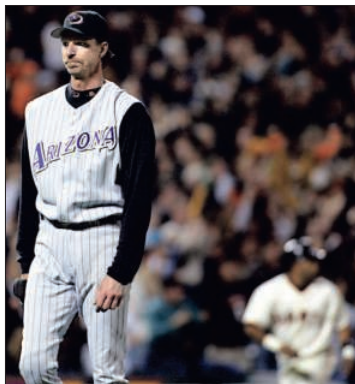
Rockies 6, Padres 5: Pinch-hitter Mark Sweeney hit a tiebreaking two-run homer off Trevor Hoffman in the ninth inning.

The visiting Rockies, who have won seven of eight, trailed 4-3 entering the ninth before Larry Walker led off with a full-count walk against Hoffman (2-1), who blew his third save.

Rods 3, Brewers 0: At Milwaukee, Aaron Harang tied his career high with 10 strikeouts as Willy Mo Pena homered.

Since spending most of June on the disabled list with a sprained ligament in his right elbow, Harang (5-2) has allowed just one earned run in 18 1/3 innings.

Cardinals 6, Cubs 1: Jason Marquis (9-4) allowed a run on nine hits in eight-plus innings for his career-high ninth win, and the Cardinals got homers from Edgar Renteria, Albert Pujols, Jim Edmonds and Tony Womack.



Arizona Diamondbacks' Randy Johnson looks away as the San Francisco Giants score three runs in the fifth inning Friday. Luis Gonzalez dropped a ball hit by Edgaro Alfonzo in the fifth inning Friday.

Schilling won't pitch in All-Star Game

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Curt Schilling will not pitch in next week's All-Star Game because of pain in his ankle.

"My priority is always the organization," Schilling said Friday after manager Terry Francona announced the decision.

"There's always an outside chance something could happen if I pitch that would impact my second half and I'm not willing to take that chance."

Francona said Schilling (11-4) reached the decision after consulting with the team's medical staff.

"It's probably not what the fans want to hear but it's the right thing to do," Francona said before Boston's game against Texas. "I left it completely up to him. I wanted him to make the right choice on his own after speaking with the medical people."

If Schilling would have started



the All-Star Game he would have received a \$50,000 bonus.

Bonds denies report of payment for Home Run Derby

SAN FRANCISCO — Barry Bonds disputed a report Friday that claimed he will participate in the Home Run Derby at All-Star weekend because Major League Baseball gave him financial compensation.

The Giants slugger blasted the San Francisco Chronicle's story, calling it "flat-out wrong and a flat-out lie, period."

Though Bonds initially expressed trepidation about joining the home run-hitting contest, he agreed Thursday to join several other sluggers in one of the event's most impressive fields.

Philadelphia's Jim Thome, Cincinnati's Ken Griffey Jr. and the Cubs' Sammy Sosa will join Bonds on the NL team in Houston on Monday, with Texas' Hank Blalock, New York's Jason Giambi, Boston's David Ortiz and Baltimore's Rafael Palmeiro on the AL team.

Bonds said he wanted to commit to the contest until he was sure the other three active players would hit at least 500 home runs — Sosa, Palmeiro and Griffey — would participate.

Bonds, Sosa and Griffey also comprise the NL's top outfield, which features three 500-homer hitters for the first time.

Thomas to go on disabled list

CHICAGO — The Chicago White Sox plan to put designated hitter Frank Thomas on the 15-day disabled list Sunday because of inflammation in his left ankle.

The White Sox learned Friday they will lose Thomas, one day after fellow slugger Magglio Ordonez came off the disabled list.

Ordonez missed 36 games after tearing cartilage in his left knee. He had surgery on June 5.

Encarnacion placed on DL

LOS ANGELES — Dodgers right fielder Juan Encarnacion was placed on the 15-day disabled list Friday because of tendinitis in the back of his left shoulder.

The move was retroactive to July 4. Encarnacion was batting .240 in 75 games with 12 homers and 41 RBIs.

Brewers option Obermuller to minors

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee Brewers optioned right hander Eric Obermuller to Triple-A Indianapolis on Friday, and called up infielder Matt Erickson. Obermuller, who was 3-5 with a 6.69 ERA for the Brewers, will make three or four starts at Indianapolis.

Johnson melts down on night in spotlight

Trade rumors, Bonds' record walk, errors bite Big Unit in loss to Giants

BY GREG BEACHAM

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Randy Johnson was battling the Giants' 8-3 victory over the Diamondbacks on Friday night.

No wonder he couldn't overcome them all — and no wonder the Arizona ace was in a bad mood.

Luis Gonzalez dropped Edgaro Alfonzo's bases-loaded liner to left field, allowing the go-ahead runs to score in San Francisco's 8-3 victory over the Diamondbacks on Friday night.

Pitching back home in the Bay Area was no fun for Johnson (10-7), who had an infuriating night by several standards. He allowed six hits and three walks in five innings, adding six strikeouts to his major league-leading total of 145, but never dominating.

The five-time Cy Young Award winner was ordered to walk Barry Bonds with runners on first and second in the fifth — and Alfonzo made Arizona pay with a drive that resulted in three runs on errors by Gonzalez and Steve Finley.

Johnson's frustration boiled over into a dugout confrontation with Gonzalez, though it was broken up by teammates. The Big Unit didn't return to the game — and afterward was asked about the persistent speculation linking him with the New York Yankees, who have inquired about his availability.

"I'm not going to comment on any of that stuff," Johnson said.

"Eventually, I will just stop talking to the press. I haven't been approached by the Diamondbacks yet. They don't have a trade in place yet. I haven't been asked to waive my no-trade clause. Don't ask again, and that's the nicest way I will ask."

Jerome Williams (8-6) outpitched Johnson with six innings of three-hit ball. Williams also drew a walk to start San Francisco's four-run fifth.

But all eyes were on Bonds' matchup with the Big Unit. Bonds came away with an RBI single, a line-drive out — and his 68th intentional walk of the season, which tied his own major league record.

After Johnson walked Bonds, Gonzalez then got his glove on Alfonzo's drive but couldn't hang on, allowing two runs to score. Finley picked up the ball and made a bad throw to the infield, permitting Bonds to score for a 6-3 lead.

"I wanted the pitcher, and that didn't help," Johnson said.

"That inning should have been over before anything transpired."

When the Diamondbacks got back to their dugout after the inning ended, several players could be seen scurrying quickly toward some activity in the tunnel leading to the visiting locker room. That's where Johnson apparently confronted Gonzalez, though most teammates were tightlipped about it.

Gonzalez said there were no lingering problems.

"Everything is over. It's fine," he said.

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SPORTS



Gordon extends remarkable run with fourth straight pole, Page 26

New Chevy Celebrity

Earnhardt Jr.'s star transcends NASCAR

BY ED HINTON
The Orlando Sentinel

ORLANDO, Fla. — The shrieking siren parts the seas of people, and many stop and gawk at the unmarked SUV with its deeply tinted windows and flashing blue lights.

They cannot tell who is inside. If they could, they would collapse around him, swarm him frighteningly, as so many fans of people do on Sunday mornings when he is transported by open golf cart to his pre-race personal appearances at racetracks.

In the backseat, barely awake, in T-shirt, jeans and sunglasses, sits Dale Earnhardt Jr., the real and unassuming version of the high-priced human commodity, the pop-culture icon.

He'd just as soon still be in bed in his million-dollar motor coach in the private, high-fenced, highly secure compound reserved for drivers and owners in the infield. But this appearance is easy enough, relatively speaking. Michigan International Speedway is a traditional old NASCAR track where fans, by and large, behave themselves.

"Here, everybody knows the deal," he

says. "Michigan, everybody knows the routine. They've been doing it for years."

For real bedlam, "mostly it's the new places we go. You go to Kansas, or even Texas still, and man (here he goes into his impression of a disc jockey, cheerleading on the P.A. system at a celebrity personal appearance), they're in a fren-zee! They can't believe it! They been waitin' all year for this [expletive]! And it's here now! And they're crazy!"

More bewildering and scary still are the appearances that have little to do with racing and a lot to do with America's perception

of the image, the name that has transcended NASCAR more than his late father's ever did.

"When we go to MTV deals or VH1 deals or anywhere in Hollywood or do any kind of talk show, it's like another world," he says. "It's not something I know much about. Not that it's bad, or that I don't like it. There's just not the comfort level that you have here. This (the track) is like my living room, my bedroom, my backyard, everything. I'm really blind in those [other] deals."

"Jude (Gurs, his press agent and aide de camp) has to remind me, 'Man, you're more popular than you imagine.' Because I'm always like, 'Man, I'm not supposed to be here; I don't feel like I belong here. I'm not at this level, man. Let's get out of here, man.' And he's like, 'Dude, you just don't know, man. Everybody wants you here. Everything's cool.'"

The madness of it all sometimes translates into mirth for Earnhardt.

SEE CELEBRITY ON PAGE 26



Lakers close deal, hire Tomjanovich as head coach

Page 27



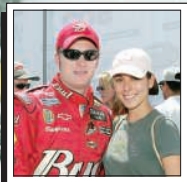
D-backs' Johnson has rough outing, dismisses rumors of impending trade

Page 31



Jones off to slow start in U.S. Olympic trials

Page 24



As NASCAR's most popular driver and a pop-culture icon, Dale Earnhardt Jr. has grown used to the spotlight, whether it means taping a segment with Craig Kilborn for CBS' "The Late, Late Show" (top) or rubbing shoulders with celebrities like Jamie-Lynn Discala of "The Sopranos" (above) or rock star Lenny Kravitz (far left).

Photos courtesy of NASCAR

